

**PROCEEDINGS**  
**of the Ninth**  
**Conference on Mennonite**  
**Educational and Cultural**  
**Problems**



**Held at**  
**Hesston College, Hesston, Kansas, June 18-19, 1953**



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Under the Auspices of the Council of  
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Bethel College  
Bluffton College  
Eastern Mennonite College  
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Goshen College  
Hesston College  
Messiah Bible College  
Tabor College  
Upland College

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# EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF MENNONITE AND AFFILIATED COLLEGES

**THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 1953**

**Hesston College, Hesston, Kansas**

## **Morning Session—9:00 to 12:00**

Chairman: C. N. Hostetter, Messiah Bible College

Devotions

Addresses

"The Significance of the Cultural Conference for Our Mennonite Educational Institutions and the Church"

*J. W. Fretz, Bethel College*

"How can Mennonite Educational Institutions Combat the Disintegrating Forces which Threaten Family Life?"

*Russell Mast, Freeman, S. Dakota*

Discussion

## **Afternoon Session—1:30 to 4:30**

Chairman: Roy D. Roth, Hesston College

Devotions

Panel Discussion: Problems and Educational Values Inherent in Extra-Curricular Activities

(a) Types of Extra-Curricular Activities and their value

*Walter E. Oswald, Hesston Jr. College*

(b) The problem of integrating Extra-Curricular Activities

*Eldon Graber, Bethel College*

(c) The problem of correlating Extra-Curricular Activities

with the curriculum . . . *Howard Kauffman, Goshen College*

## **CULTURAL PROBLEMS SESSION**

### **Evening Session—7:30 to 9:00**

Chairman: L. J. Franz

Devotions

Address

"Outside Influences on Mennonite Religious Thought"

*H. S. Bender, Goshen College*

**FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 1953**

**Morning Session—9:00 to 12:00**

Chairman: Elmer Ediger, Exec. Sec., G. C. Board of Christian Service

Devotions

Addresses

“An Evaluation of Mennonite Social Welfare Institutions”

*Andrew Shelly, Mennonite Biblical Seminary*

“Social Work as a Christian Profession”

*Carl Smucker, Bluffton College*

Discussion

**Afternoon Session—1:30 to 4:30**

Chairman: Clayton Byler, Hesston College

Devotions

Addresses

“A Scientific Study of Social Attitudes of Mennonites Toward Other Groups”.....*Roy Just, Tabor College*

“Profile of a Mennonite Community—A Survey of Moundridge, Kansas”.....*J. Lloyd Spaulding, Wichita, Kansas*

**Evening Session—7:30 to 9:00**

Chairman: M. S. Harder, Bethel College

Devotions

Addresses

“The Mennonite View of Wealth—Past and Present”

*Melvin Gingerich, Goshen College*

“A Critique of Mennonites in Mid-Century”

*Don. E. Smucker, Mennonite Biblical Seminary*

Discussion

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## FOREWORD

The Mennonite Educational and Cultural Problems Conference, held biennially, has become a well established organ for the expression of common interests and the recording of developments in educational, cultural, and religious efforts of the various branches of the Mennonites.

The ninth Conference was held on the Hesston College campus, Hesston, Kansas. A wide variety of subjects was presented. The constituency of interest and participation in discussion on the part of those present was evidence of the well prepared papers and the timely subjects covered. As a whole a spirit of unity, cooperation, and purposefulness prevailed, and caused many attending to express the desire to give continued and even greater support in the future to the conference effort.

Two sessions were given to educational problems. At the first session the subject, "The Significance of the Cultural Conference for our Mennonite Educational Institutions and the Church," written and presented by J. Winfield Fretz was a well deserved review of the first ten years of the existence of the conference. Four sessions were devoted to the cultural problems division of the conference. Heart and mind searching analyses of Mennonite cultural problems, religious thought and action were presented. In the light of current movements in the Christian world today these discourses deserve careful study. We hope these papers will receive wide reading in Mennonite and non-Mennonite circles and that the research done will serve as a fund of information and be a stimulation for further study.

The committee is presenting the proceedings of the Ninth Mennonite Educational and Cultural Problems Conference with the hope that the readers will in a measure share the information and inspiration as those did who attended the Conference.

Leonard J. Franz





# AN EVALUATION OF THE CULTURAL CONFERENCES AFTER TEN YEARS

*J. Winfield Fretz*

## BACKGROUND

It would be well for religious and educational institutions to adopt the practice of regularly re-examining institutional ideals, objectives and achievements. In the business world this practice of regularly taking inventory is now not only a common voluntary practice, it is practically mandatory. It is a lot easier to take inventory in business than it is in education because in business one is dealing with visible material objects rather than with invisible ideals. Nevertheless a careful periodic evaluation of intangible ideals would provide an excellent basis for planning future courses.

The beginning of the Educational and Cultural Conference sessions had their background in a desire for some such evaluative process. General cultural developments by the latter part of the thirties had made a number of Mennonite intellectual and religious leaders conscious of the need for inter-Mennonite discussion on problems common to all groups. The immediate background of the Cultural Conference was a one day conference on Mennonite Sociology held in Chicago on December 31, 1941. This conference was organized as a result of informal preliminary discussions about the desirability of Mennonite scholars periodically convening for mutual edification and exchanging of information. Evidence that the time was ripe for such a conference was the fact that out of fifty-three people invited forty-seven attended. Most of those who attended the first session have maintained a continuing interest. The chief weakness of the Sociology Conference was that the day was too packed full of addresses. There were eleven short addresses from 2 o'clock till 8:30 in the evening plus a panel of college presidents from 8:30 to 10:00. It was the unanimous opinion of those present that a subsequent conference should be held. The result of that desire was the first conference on Mennonite Cultural Problems held at Winona Lake, Indiana, August 7 and 8, 1942. There were 119 registered in attendance at the first regular conference.

In conjunction with this conference was the first session of what has now come to be the Council of Mennonite and Affiliated Colleges. The main theme of these first educational sessions was "Mennonite Colleges in Wartime." The outgrowth of these meetings was the decision to have such conferences annually. The first two sessions of each conference were to be devoted more exclu-

sively to problems pertaining to College Administrators while the other four sessions were to be devoted to broader cultural problems confronting Mennonites in general. From 1942 to 1947 annual conferences were held. There was no conference in 1948 due to the World Conference convening in this country. In 1949 at the Tabor conference it was decided to make the conference bi-annual. The present conference then marks the ninth conference on Mennonite Educational and Cultural Problems.

At the first Cultural Conference session the question was raised about the permanent organization of this conference, specifically about who would be the sponsor of such an organization. There were three prominent suggestions, first that this conference should be independently organized and sponsored by those individuals who had an interest in it. The second proposal was that these conferences be annually arranged by the MCC since this was already an operating organization on an inter-Mennonite basis. The third suggestion was that the conference be sponsored by the Mennonite college administrators because it was felt that these conferences were primarily academic in character and for that reason should be sponsored by educational institutions rather than a service agency such as the MCC. The first suggestion contained the danger of impermanence and lack of adequate backing to see that the conferences would be held regularly and the addresses printed. The experience of the first ten years under the sponsorship of the Council of Mennonite and Affiliated Colleges has been on the whole generally satisfactory.

### SIGNIFICANCE

While it is not easy to agree on the achievements and the significance of conferences, since they affect individuals differently, the following may be said to be significant achievements of the Cultural Conference.

1. These conferences bring faculty members of various Mennonite and Affiliated colleges together periodically for serious discussions about mutual problems confronting institutions of higher learning. Prior to the holding of the Cultural Conferences, Mennonite College faculty members were generally complete strangers to each other.

2. The Cultural Conferences have not only brought faculty members together but by means of circulating the places of the conferences acquaintance has become possible with the campuses, the physical equipment and the setting of the various Mennonite and Affiliated colleges and academies.

3. The Cultural Conferences provide an incentive regularly for inter-Mennonite research and discussion. These conferences

stimulate research in areas where universities and research agencies would normally not be interested.

4. The periodic conferences provide a method and a regular channel for collecting, discussing and publishing research in various areas of progress. Very often individuals are stimulated to do better research if they have a chance to discuss their project and have an occasion to read it in whole or in part before a group of sympathetically critical leaders. The Cultural Conference thus brings into circulation the written materials of young scholars which otherwise might remain in obscurity.

5. These conferences over the years build up a body of printed resource materials for use of the present and of coming generations. Already an impressive number of college and university libraries have standing orders for the printed proceedings of the conference because they provide current factual data with which to inform graduate students interested in various aspects of Mennonite history, life and culture.

6. It is an inexpensive way of getting a large amount of research and educational work done by our colleges. The total cost of an entire conference is less than the salary of its lowest paid man for a single quarter. Or in other words the cost to our colleges is about equal to the cost of sending one of its representatives to a national professional meeting and the costs for an entire conference appear to be considerably less than the costs of sending a college representative to a North Central Association workshop.

7. The value of these conferences must be considered carefully both by the colleges and by the churches which support them, because they provide a body of factual information and critically objective interpretation of current trends and problems that affect the ideals and objectives of churches and schools. Previous to these conferences research was carried on largely by interested individuals without the stimulation of the group or in many cases the means of disseminating information which had been assembled.

### PROBLEMS

A constantly recurring problem of the Cultural Conference is that of financing the publication of the proceedings. The volume of sales is always too small to absorb the cost of printing without making the individual copies prohibitive in price. Thus it has been necessary for the conference to operate with a deficit year after year. In 1951 the college presidents helped this situation somewhat by going on record as favoring the taking of advanced fixed orders and pledging to pay for a fixed number of copies in advance. But even this did not take care of the full cost of print-



ing. It would seem a reasonable course of procedure to have the colleges prorate the expenses of publishing the proceedings each year and write it off as research. Each college prints its catalogues and publicity materials each year and does not expect any returns from those who use them. If our colleges could see the wisdom of promoting these conferences as a means of stimulating needed research and could justify the expense in printing the Proceedings it would then mean that the sale of the printed Proceedings could accumulate as a balance in the conference treasury. Since the conferences are held on alternate years the costs per college would be spread still further and thus not seem to be prohibitive.

While addressing myself chiefly to college administrators I should like to make the point also that it seems like an admission of inferiority when we allow our college representatives traveling expenses to national conferences but feel that conferences such as this unworthy of adequate financial support. Yet it may not be too much to claim that the value of such conferences as the one we are attending may in the long run produce greater inspiration and stimulation toward the objectives of our institutional and denominational ideals than the national professional meetings which we feel compelled to attend.

### THE FUTURE

While the first ten years of Cultural Conference history can claim significant achievements in this field of inter-Mennonite cooperative action, this cooperative venture is still in its infancy. Thus far it has not permeated our entire facilities. It has been too much confined to the area of the social sciences and the humanities. This is not due to exclusiveness or design in this direction but because of a lack of success in attracting the interest of other fields. It is a sincere hope that in the next ten years a larger percentage of faculty members can be vigorously interested in these conferences and a wider variety of subject matters discussed. The conferences could well be used by college administrators as occasions for stimulating research in needed areas by staff members. Thus far I do not think that many college administrators have encouraged faculty members to launch out on research projects with the intention of publishing their proceedings at future Cultural Conference sessions. The papers presented are all too often short order custom made papers on subjects pertaining to passing interests. More work of the caliber of work comparable to the Mennonite Research Foundation at Goshen, Indiana, may be envisaged for a future day.

## HOW CAN MENNONITE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS COMBAT THE DISINTEGRATING FORCES WHICH THREATEN FAMILY LIFE?

*Russell L. Mast*

That all is not well with the institution of the American home requires little argument. It requires little argument, moreover, that there are "disintegrating forces which threaten family life." The clearest symptom of this disease is the mounting divorce rate, a fact well known to almost every American, and one which causes earnest Christians increasing alarm. Perhaps it is true that the rapid increase in the ratio of divorces to marriage does not necessarily mean that the increase in marital failure likewise has been as great. It may mean only that more people are using divorce as a method of escaping the fact of marital failure. One suspects that in days gone by there were many who held their marital relationships together merely to avoid the shame of divorce; and that actually their relationships were far from successful. This is to some extent true today. So the divorce rate, which is a symptom of the disease, does not tell the whole story. There is no way of knowing statistically how much marital unhappiness there is, or how many disorganized families there are. Yet, surely one can say, upon the basis of the indications that we have, that there is a manifest wrongness in the lives of American people that issues in widespread marital failure, and in a growing number of disorganized homes.

Mennonites have traditionally placed great emphasis upon the home and family life, as well as on the sacredness of the marriage bond. While no complete statistics are available, we do know that divorces occur less frequently among church people, less frequently among rural people, and we have good reason to believe, less frequently among Mennonites. In addition to being church people, and rural, we would like to think that our Anabaptist heritage has had some bearing on that fact. Yet we Mennonites live in no ivory tower of isolation. The disease has begun to break out in our ranks too. There are strong indications that our homes are not as strong, stable, and secure as once they were. More and more we are forced to deal with disorganized families, which seek divorce as the way out.

It is well for our educational institutions to consider what can be done to prevent the disease, which manifests itself increasingly in the symptom of divorce. Church discipline on the matter of divorce is simply "too little and too late." It is "locking the barn after the horse is stolen." I am not raising the question of church

discipline. Surely we need some standards to clarify our position. I am saying that church discipline is not enough. If we close the door on divorce as a way out of marital difficulty, we must be ready to open another door instead.

One of the central concerns of the church is the transforming of the total life after the image of Christ. The experience of regeneration within the human spirit must issue in newness of life. It must be an "evidenced life." There can be no solution to the problem of the disintegrating family life that does not begin with this transforming experience. It precludes that every home member is thoroughly Christian. But it cannot leave the matter there. It is not enough to say, "Let every home member be a born again Christian and the problem will be solved." It overlooks the important fact that is always necessary to spell out in detail what it means to be a Christian in the home. From decision we must move to discipleship, and discipleship implies learning, nurture, and growth.

At this very point our Mennonite educational institutions stand in a very strategic relation to our problem. For one thing, they deal with young people during the crucial years when they make plans and choices which vitally affect the homes which they will eventually build. Our educational institutions are in a position to develop such attitudes and create such ideals as are Christ-centered. The college campus is in a sense a community within a community. It can, to some extent at least, resist the encroachments of secularism. Then too, educational institutions in general have already demonstrated some degree of success in this respect. Nearly all the studies which have been made in this regard show conclusively that the greatest measure of stability in home and family life falls within the educated class. If the absence of divorce indicates home stability, then there is already an exceptionally high degree of success among the graduates of our own educational institutions. However, there are some indications that this high record may be breaking. Hence we need to think the matter through, while it is yet day, "How can Mennonite educational institutions combat the disintegrating forces which threaten family life?" Having no access to authorities in this field, I offer only what occurs to me as I try to think through the problem. Here are some of the means by which this task may be implemented.

### **Courses of Study**

That which occurs to one first is the use of special courses of study relating to the problems of marriage and family life. As far as formal courses on family life are concerned, they constitute a rather recent development in academic procedure. Edu-



cators have only recently become aware of a need for specific training for family experience. It has been assumed up to the very recent past that family living will take care of itself. Getting along with one's wife or husband, or bringing up one's children were things anyone could achieve if he really wanted to. Yet all about us are people who want to love each other, who want to make a go of marriage, but who seem not to know how. So within secondary schools and colleges, courses on home making and family living have emerged.

What is perhaps most encouraging about this is the widespread popularity of such courses. One teacher told me that his class on the family is always large, and there is no problem to get students to do outside reading. We may be witnessing an upsurge of interest in the home and family life. FORTUNE magazine declares, "Today the prospect of marriage and children is popular again." Based on a study of twenty-five colleges, 60% of the girls and 50% of the men would like to marry within a year after graduation. Henry C. Link declared that 90 to 95% of young women regard a career as a wife and mother as their primary aim and consider helping a husband in his career more important than having a career of their own.

A comparison of the course offerings in eight of our colleges indicates that all of them give a basic course in the family under the department of Sociology. Other courses given are homemaking, child development, and family health under the department of Home Economics (presumably taken only by girls); child psychology, adolescent psychology under the department of Education. Two of our colleges offer courses in children's literature. Messiah Bible College has a Christian workers' course on the Christian Home (eight hours) divided into the following units: A. Childhood, B. Courtship, C. Marriage, D. The Family.

Not all of our colleges give all of the courses mentioned. Some offer a greater choice in this field than others. What cannot be determined by a mere study of the catalogues is how many of the students are reached by these courses and how effectively. It would certainly not be too much to require that each student who graduates from our colleges be required to take one substantial course in marriage and the family. Nor should it be too much to expect the college administration to provide a thoroughly qualified teacher for the course. Under no condition should it become a snap course somewhere at the periphery of the curriculum.

### **A Setting for a Wholesome Meeting of Young People**

It has often been said with tongue in cheek that our colleges are nothing but match factories. Personally I could never be

quite that bitter about it! Waller, in his study of the family, avers. "One might safely postulate the thesis that the basic cause of divorce today is faulty mate selection. . ." I submit therefore, that one of the most significant contributions our Mennonite schools and colleges are making in combatting the disintegrating forces which threaten family life is to provide a wholesome setting for mate selection. It may be quite unromantic to say it, but sociologists have long reminded us that one of the factors most conducive to falling in love is the simple element of propinquity. Where better than on a Christian college campus can this be done under more favorable conditions? Here young men and women, with similar ideals and backgrounds, under a common religious influence can become acquainted with each other in the various aspects of college community life. The importance of this aspect of college life is revealed in a study of Popenoe that not more than one in seventy-five marriages of couples who met at coeducational colleges ends in divorce, whereas one marriage in six ends in divorce among marriages in general."<sup>1</sup>

Our colleges are now old enough to demonstrate that the element of propinquity insuring wholesome mate selection can carry on through the second generation. You will have noticed in the *Mennonite Weekly Review* the story of the Bauman family. Harvey Bauman and Ella Garber graduated from Bluffton College in 1919. Eventually they married and graduated from medical school. In addition to serving as missionary doctors in India, they raised five children, all of whom attended Bluffton College as well as their mates. Within the family circle there are five doctors or prospective doctors, and all plan to return to India as missionaries. Stories like that serve to point up the significance of what our colleges are doing in bringing young people together under wholesome conditions. The unromantic element of propinquity can be used of God in building great homes.

This aspect of college or school life does not take care of itself. It may not be difficult to bring young people together, but to do so under wholesome conditions requires wise and careful guidance. Our topic for this afternoon suggests that there are values inherent in extra-curricular activities and also problems. I suspect that one of the values would be that it affords an opportunity for young men and women to do unsentimental things together, to appraise aspects of weakness and strength in each other, and to learn to know each other under various conditions of life. It would seem unrealistic to make no provisions for wholesome dating, that are in keeping with college aims and standards.

### **Counselling Opportunities**

Are there those on each campus who are available for counsel-

ling? Are there those who are sufficiently free from teaching or administrative duties who can meet with students? Are there those who quite naturally claim the confidence of the students? College young people, as they come together in couples, as they think seriously about marriage and become engaged, and plan for the future, have many problems. With all their best intentions, they find themselves in misunderstandings and difficulties. They become so wrapped up in their little worlds that they lose perspective. They make blunders, and with all their intentions to be happy are desperately unhappy. They cannot get along with each other and they cannot get along without each other. Is there someone older available to them, to whom they can go for sympathetic, wise and understanding counsel? I wonder if this is not a gap in our educational program which calls for some intelligent planning? Perhaps we need to evaluate our counselling program. Or perhaps we need to begin by first training our counsellors.

One thing is sure. Whoever develops the least amount of skill in this regard will be flooded with opportunity to counsel. As I indicated before, people want to know how to make the most of marriage. They want to know how to get along with one another. Our experience in mental hospitals in C.P.S. and now under our own M.C.C. sponsored mental hospitals may encourage more of our young people to become proficient in the field of counselling of students in particular and marital counselling in general.

### Examples of Good Home Building

Have we explored all the avenues of influence available to the college? I think not. For there is before us yet another mighty avenue in the process of education. It is that which we are perhaps most inclined to overlook or discount. But I say to you that one of the most powerful means of combatting the disintegrating forces which threaten family life is the example of great home building and joyful family life on the part of those who teach and administer the program of education. College young people are at the point in life where they begin to formulate their concepts of what home life can and ought to be. It is safe to say that no home will rise any higher than the ideal which inspires it. All the reading that may be assigned in books or in papers will have only a fraction of the educational value of a living example. It can be put something like this: that an ounce of example is worth a pound of exhortation.

It should not be too much to say that faculty members should be selected at least partly on the basis of their home life and the possible influence they may thus radiate on the campus. Certainly no one should be on a teaching staff whose home life is



one of constant bickering and tension, or one who is obviously mismated, or one who radiates cynicism instead of idealism regarding home building. Our schools and colleges, for the most part, are like small towns in this respect. Nearly everyone knows everyone else. Nor are faculty members, who may live a distance from the campus, totally insulated from the college community. Their homes are open books to students. All of this means that perhaps the most effective way of combatting the disintegrating forces which threaten family life is to create a living ideal in the minds of future home builders. They will say, "That is the kind of a home my home is going to be." Students who are away from home and living in dormitories are highly susceptible to the influence of strong homes into which they have opportunity to come now and then. It is important, therefore, that they be all that homes can be.

### **The Relation of the College to the Constituency**

Is it possible to extend the influence and ministry of the college beyond the campus itself? I rather suspect that Mennonite institutions have done better in maintaining contact with the constituency than most church-related colleges. The college must be in many ways ahead of the church, but not so far ahead that college and constituency live in separate worlds. One can only suggest ways in which this extended ministry can be implemented in terms of strengthening the home. The counselling service might conceivably be extended beyond the campus. I have known couples with highly complex marital difficulties who would have been glad to drive several hundred miles to get expert counsel from a Christian counsellor. Family life institutes might be conducted by colleges in local churches. Readable booklets like the excellent series edited by Alta Mae Erb can be produced. Fact-finding studies like the one on divorce conducted by the Mennonite Seminary might be conducted. Some of our colleges are conducting short term winter courses, and night courses as well as correspondence courses which reach out beyond the immediate campus. All of these are effective instruments for family education.

Our educational institutions must enlarge, extend, and deepen what they have already done in combatting the disintegrating forces which threaten family life. There is an awakened readiness on the part of the American people in general and our own people in particular to receive wise guidance in effective home building in this highly complex age. "God setteth the solitary in families." The family is still, and always will be the basic institution of society. It is written into the very laws of our being.



# TYPES OF EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND THEIR VALUES

*Walter Oswald*

## I. Definition

Several decades ago defining the term extra-curricular activities was a relatively simple matter. During these decades nearly all the activities outside of the regularly pre-arranged credit curricula were organized and promoted largely by the students themselves. Teachers and administrators had very little to do with them except to sanction and to give general encouragement. It is also true that most of the extra activities were strictly outside of the regularly scheduled courses. They could, therefore, rightly be called extra-curricular. But, defining what is actually taking place within the last decade in this so called extra phase of schoolwork is not so simple, because more and more teachers sponsor such activities and in a number of cases professional sponsors are employed full time by school authorities. A broadened scope of activities is more and more generally accepted and even sponsored by teachers already carrying a full curricular load. This general change of sponsorship and promotional work has raised the question in the minds of many as to whether the term extra-curricular is a true designation for what is actually happening. And so, within the last five or even ten years we find such designations as: co-curricular, semi-curricular, extra-class, super-curricular, and some even go so far as to call them anti-curricular. One of the schools in replying to my questionnaire on this problem says, "We call all our activities co-curricular rather than extra-curricular in our institution."

However, it seems that in spite of—not because of—all these more recent designations the designation "extra-curricular" seems to prevail and probably still implies more nearly what we have in mind even at this point of their development than any of the other designations. This interpretation, it seems to me, applies to the schools interested in this special study at this point. I propose therefore that we think of the concept of extra-curricular as all activities not in the regularly, credited, scheduled curricula.

Just a word as to the reasons for this more and more complicated extra-curricular program. In the first place it undoubtedly comes from a growing recognition on the part of educators that students do not come to school on what someone has called mental stilts, entirely separated from the rest of their personality, for

development. We are believing more and more that the mental, physical, social and spiritual aspect of a personality must be equally developed to make a well adjusted, happy individual ready to make his fullest contribution to his generation. Stated in another way we are believing more and more that all aspects of one's life must receive attention in a formal training program in order to turn out well-balanced personalities. In other words, we believe more and more in the validity of the rather blanket statement made by Dr. McKown that "It is possible for a man to become a mental genius and a social fool, at the same time." Therefore the trend to get away from the idea that it is wise to develop one aspect of personality at the expense of any other brings about more and more activities not included in the regular "stunt" curricula. It is reaching the point of the swing of the pendulum to where many educators are becoming alarmed lest the growing interest in these newer and extra activities tend to smother the interest in the traditional and what was designated above as "stunt" courses.

## II. Types of Extra-curricular Activities

The types of extra-curricular activities which I have listed are taken from the replies to questionnaires sent to the nine schools represented in this conference. Only seven replies were received. I have tried to classify these activities into four categories—mental, physical, social, and spiritual. Critical scrutiny will, no doubt, reveal wrong classifications of some, for in a sense all are mental, all are social, all are physical, and all are spiritual, depending on the emphasis in the particular activity. No activity has been listed more than once. The highest number of activities listed in any one school was thirty-one and the lowest number six. The following, therefore, is an attempt to make these listed activities more intelligible:

A. Mental—Alpha Sigma Omega, Biology Club, commerce club, home economics club, international relations club, physics club, forensics club, language clubs (German, French, Spanish) Astral Society, pre-medical club, pre-nursing club, aero club, educational (various titles) club, various school editorial staffs, photographers guild, and dramatics club.

B. Physical—Athletic club, Lettermen's Club, (athletic) basketball, track, baseball, college hikes, recreation club and college Highlanders, and many so-called minor sports.

C. Social—Beta Kappa (girls' pep club), Gamma Sigma Chi (girls' service club), many music groups including quartets, octets, choruses, etc. It is probably questionable whether the music groups belong here.

D. Spiritual—Student Christian Associations (YPCA, YMCA, YWCA) with all their allied activities, Christian Youth Volunteers, Peace Club, Gospel teams, student ministers fellowship, Future Ministers Club, B.R.E. Fellowship, and missionary fellowship.

The problems of integrating these various activities and also the problem of correlating these types of activities with the regular curricula are to be discussed by the other two members of the panel.

Briefly, in conclusion, what are the values which we may expect to derive from these activities? Again I lean heavily on McKown for my general answers. He lists the values which should be derived from these activities about as follows:

1. These various special activities capitalize on the important fundamental drives possessed by every normal individual.

2. Unless the activities are dominated too much by faculty sponsors it prepares the student for active life in a democracy.

3. The activities should certainly aid in doing what all education should aim to do, viz. make the student increasingly more self-directive.

4. Certainly all the activities listed above, should, under proper leadership, directly or indirectly make students more socially co-operative.

5. If the activities function as they should they increase the students' over-all interest in the school.

6. They should be a great aid in developing school morale in general and they also foster healthy sentiments of law and order.

They should help the students discover within themselves their special qualities and abilities.

Having said these things in what may be interpreted as an overstatement of extra-curricular activity values we must be careful that we do not get our thinking to the place where we feel that they represent a complete and adequate program of educational opportunities. It seems to me that the most we can claim of value is that they do offer supplementary educational settings for total personality development which may and should be capitalized. I feel McKown is right when he says that, "A school with only extra-curricular activities would be just as absurd as a school without any extra-curricular activities."

# THE PROBLEM OF INTEGRATING EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

*Eldon W. Graber*

## **The Student As A Determining Factor In His Own Educational Program**

All educators are agreed that the student is the central figure in his own educational program and that he must move toward a position of responsibility in determining his goals and of implementing the means of attaining them. To establish the student's readiness to assume this responsibility, it is imperative that he be encouraged to assist in the development of his college program and, at the same time, to have access to faculty and staff members who are amenable to his participation in the formulation of his curricular and extra-curricular program of education. These faculty members must, of necessity, encourage in the student an understanding of the importance of both the academic and the extra-curricular achievement in higher education. The problem of scheduling social and recreational periods versus work and study should be, in a large measure the responsibility of the student. It is evident that counselling by the faculty and the administration will greatly influence the decisions of the student.

In addition to the on-campus experiences, the student should be encouraged to take part in as many community activities as he can successfully put into his program. This may result in a wider social recognition which in turn results in a beneficial student motivation. Furthermore, in such community activities the student's association with faculty members is almost invariably on a participating level in which they are working side by side toward the same objective. This idea seems to be particularly valuable in developing student-faculty rapport.

Student interest in intellectual and curricular activities outside the classroom is enhanced by participation in the promotion, direction and management of such activities. There is value in allowing students to make choices in selecting from a large number such activities as they deem useful to them personally. In this way a comprehensive extra-curricular activity program will provide for the variety of needs that students have. Each student for the sake of mental health should experience satisfactory accomplishment in some area, but at the same time opportunity for a reasonable development in other areas should be afforded.

Too many students are content to engage only in activities at which they have previously been successful. They have a fear of



passing through the novice stage. In the acquisition of a new skill there are always hurdles and here again, good guidance will help students to overcome such barriers.

The quality of participation is more important than the extent. Being a joiner—as many students are—just for the sake of a long extra-curricular activity list is not only frequently of no value, but sometimes is positively detrimental. Some educators believe that more emphasis should be placed on better participation in fewer activities. Acceptance of responsibility is one of the more important attributes of a mature person.

The various extra-curricular activities should be worth while and should be directed by students. In a pre-college conference held in 1952, faculty members at Hope College agreed that one of the first reasons for the existence of an extra-curricular activity should be student desire and interest.<sup>1</sup>

The experience afforded students in operating their own organizations is excellent training for civic participation in the school community and in the larger world outside. Student government is an excellent medium for aiding the student to become familiar with the social processes of which he is a part and with the government which limits some of his activities. Colleges must make provision for a variety of activities so that needs of the students can be met.

An attempt has been made to point out that the student is the central figure in his own educational program and that voluntary choice among a variety of activities is desirable. Faculty guidance and participation in student directed activities are both essential features in a well-balanced program. Some attention should now be given to problem areas found in the extra curriculum.

### **The Student and Social Adjustment**

The ability to get along with others is a significant factor in social behavior. The individual is indeed rare who is without problems or difficulties that center around certain feelings of personal and social relationships that are a part of social behavior. Educators have often looked to extra-curricular activities to help provide education in personal and social relationships.

There is no doubt that such educational experiences are necessary. A study of more than five hundred women made at Michigan State Normal College, Ypsilanti, Michigan, listed the following degrees of concern: (1) Social Skill, (2) Belonging, (3) Faculty, (4) Social Experience, (5) Opposite Sex, (6) Physical Well Being, (7) Likeness to others, (8) Home.<sup>2</sup> This study indicates that extra-curricular activities are only one of many contributing factors in aiding students to mature socially.

Many institutions of higher learning look to fraternities and sororities to promote training in the social graces. Traditionally such organizations have not been found on the campuses of Mennonite colleges. Does this mean that their function has been absorbed in some other form of extra-curricular activity? It would seem to some observers that Mennonite institutions face an even greater problem in this area, since many forms of social recreation found in American society are unacceptable to those who embrace the Mennonite faith. In many instances students in Mennonite colleges have been given a negative, "don't do this" without being given a positive substitute for the social behavior which is not thought to be fitting on a Mennonite college campus. What is being done to alleviate this problem?

In the Hope College study mentioned previously, it was found that the programs of the fraternities and the sororities did not adequately provide for the social development of the college student. Many educators would agree with this conclusion and with the suggestion that it is the responsibility of the faculty and/or the college to provide more opportunities for the student to learn and become conscious of social values. In this area the program for each college must be tailor made. A student social-life program which succeeds in one school is unlikely to be applicable in its entirety to another institution. With the values for which we strive as a major determinant, it would seem that our colleges will probably need to provide a good share of the types of facilities needed, and the trained leadership needed for the social adjustment of students.

### Music and Athletics

Those who have studied trends in extra-curricular activities during the past thirty years find that more and more students are participating in three or more activities and that the total amount of participation is increasing. This is especially true in those activities which directly or indirectly affect the public relations of an institution. Athletics and music are in this category and as a result are increasingly being subsidized by colleges either directly or indirectly.<sup>3</sup> Coaches, sponsors, and directors for such activities command premium salaries; expenditures for equipment used in these activities often exceed many a departmental budget.

Students with skills or talents in music or athletics are eagerly sought by most institutions. Scholarships, jobs, and other inducements are utilized to compete for talented students. In some areas competition for music students assumes very interesting proportions—especially in view of the fact that accrediting associations make no attempt to regulate scholarships and grants-in-aid in music. Such recruitment policies add to the cost of music and

athletics programs and tend to produce groups or teams with definite public relations values to the institution concerned. Students often spend many hours in public relations activities because of their talents in music and athletics.

Intercollegiate athletics are only a part of the total athletic picture. Havemann and West in their study of the college graduate in America today report that during the past twenty-five years:

"The greatest increase—among women as well as men—has been in intramural athletics. Of the oldest graduates, only 33% of the men and 29% of the women took part in these non-varsity sports; of the youngest graduates 64% of the men and 48% of the women did. Athletics, far from being confined to the football and basketball players, have in recent years become a general field of activity for nearly two-thirds of men students and nearly half of the women. . . . Musical activities are about as popular among men (23% of the oldest, 20% of the youngest) but have noticeably increased among women (from 27% to 37%)."

This study further indicates that 70% of the most recent graduates studied reported participation in two or more activities.

Krehbiel and others found in a study of students who participated in music and athletics at Bethel College that from 9 to 16 hours per week were spent in these activities. It is interesting to note that none of these students were in difficulty because of low grades and that the majority thought that they were not spending too much time in extra-curricular activities. A number felt that academic credit should be granted for their activity experiences.

How much time should the student be expected to devote to one activity? Are the public relations values of music and athletics being overemphasized? Some educators feel that the granting of academic credit will help to restore a balance and avoid abuses. It is difficult to see just how this will work in all cases and whether such a policy will meet the needs of the individual student. Institutional control and sound principles of management will go far in eliminating problems. The selection of qualified faculty sponsors is also a much needed step.

Faculty sponsorship of activities must be stressed because they may be the key to a truly successful extra-curricular program. This is especially true in the areas of music and athletics. There is a need to study the basis of selection of such sponsors and the kind of training which will best fit them for this responsibility. This will be discussed further in the next section of this paper. A review of the means of determining faculty teaching loads for those who sponsor extra-curricular activities is highly desirable. Perhaps some feasible means of interesting all capable faculty members in sponsorship responsibilities should be found so that it will not be necessary to depend only upon the willing few.



In summary then, it has been pointed out that the tremendous popularity of athletics and music, their public relations values, and the trend toward subsidization of such activities creates special problems. Faculty sponsorship and guidance seem to be possible avenues for maintaining a balance.

### Activities and Teacher Education

Activities can be especially helpful to those who are preparing to teach. They can give the prospective teacher experience in leadership and group organization, practical skills in music, dramatics, sports and other clubs which they may be asked to sponsor when they enter teaching. It is generally agreed that a favorable activity record is almost a guarantee of placement for the beginning teacher. Superintendents have been known to inquire more closely into the extra-curricular activity record of the prospective teacher than into the academic record.

A recent issue of the N.E.A. Journal carries an article pointing out that the lack of courses in the area of extra-curricular activities and their sponsorship is a blind spot in teacher education.\* Actually, this problem has not gone unnoticed. Russell M. Cooper has reported more than a decade ago the efforts of Central College, Milwaukee-Downer, and Cornell College in requiring certain types of extra-curricular activity participation and leadership.\*

The Pennsylvania State Teachers Colleges each require their students to have one semester's activity participation each year. The State Teachers College at Trenton, New Jersey, has a club-leadership course for selected freshmen who later serve as leaders in outside organizations. The Teachers College of Temple University grants undergraduate credit for a course, "Participating in Activities."<sup>1</sup> Syracuse and Wayne University each have an extensive program which enables prospective teachers to gain leadership experiences in settlement houses, boy-scout or girl-scout groups and various other youth activities.

This raises the question of those students who do not participate in activities and those whose participation is very limited. On some campuses the more aggressive and capable students, who probably need further activity participation the least, tend to monopolize the offices while large numbers of other potentially able but more retiring students are left outside. An investigation in 1952 showed that nearly forty per cent of the students at Bethel College engaged in no extra-curricular activity participation.\* Such a distribution of activities might indicate the need for an activities census which would seek to discover possibilities for enlisting further unutilized student talent.

Thus the student who is preparing to teach is faced with the



problem on one hand of keeping up his grade point average in order to qualify for a teacher's certificate, and on the other of finding ways to get in his activity participation. For some years now, at Bethel College, each prospective student has been required to observe or participate in some extra-curricular activity before he completes his student teaching. A further attempt is made through individual counselling to aid the student to prepare himself to sponsor an extra-curricular activity and to fit himself for participation in the life of the community in which he will teach. This emphasis helps to prepare prospective teachers for their first teaching positions.

Colleges which continue to prepare teachers will need to include some educational experiences which will give competence in the sponsorship of activities. Some methods of distributing extra-curricular activities among all students will need to be found. This may well be accomplished by joint faculty-student committees and cooperation.

### Conclusions

1. It is the responsibility of the college to provide numerous desirable extra-curricular activities to meet the needs of the student body. The student, himself, is the central figure in his own educational program and must assume a major responsibility for his total educational program—both the curricular and the extra-curricular.

2. Faculty guidance and faculty participation are absolutely essential in a well-rounded program of activities. Problem areas develop when either the faculty, or the students refuse to accept responsibility in the extra-curricular program.

3. Faculty sponsorship may be the key to the solution of the student's difficulties in attempting to integrate his extra-curricular activity program. The selection of faculty sponsors, their training and their qualifications will need to be studied by college administrators. Contagious interest and enthusiasm, liking for students, intellectual curiosity, ability to inspire confidence are but a few of the needed qualities.

4. A weakness of the activity programs found on our Mennonite college campuses may lie in the lack of sufficient activities designed to aid students in making adequate social adjustments. The absence of the traditional fraternities and sororities suggests that other plans will need to be utilized. Faculty members may wish to invite students into their own homes to help students in this area.

5. Athletics and music have distinct public relations values, have been increasingly subsidized by colleges and have sometimes creat-

ed problems for students and administration alike. Adequate sponsorship backed by wise institutional policies will go far toward minimizing problems in this area. An increase in student participation in intramural activities of this kind seems to be a wholesome trend.

6. The lack of formal education for sponsoring extra-curricular activities seems to be a blind spot in teacher education. A number of forwardlooking colleges are including this type of training in their programs of teacher education. Formal coursework and credit for such training seems to be in the picture for the future.

7. Is there a need for a new type of extra-curricular activity? Should Mennonite colleges establish a voluntary service club which would give opportunities for volunteer work and service? Our heritage and current practices certainly suggest it.

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<sup>1</sup> Hope College, *The Role of Co-Curricular Activities in a College Education*, 1952.

<sup>2</sup> Hollis, Adelyn, "College Students' Problems and Participation in Student Activities," *School Activities*, March, 1953, p. 225.

<sup>3</sup> *Improvement of Teacher Education*, Official reports of the Regional Conference of the N.C.A. held at Pittsburg, Kansas, July 1, 1949, p.70.

<sup>4</sup> Havemann and West, *They Went to College*, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1952, p. 226.

<sup>5</sup> Sterner, W. S., "A Blind Spot in Teacher Education?" *NEA Journal*, May 1953.

<sup>6</sup> Cooper, R. M., *Better Colleges—Better Teachers*, New York, Macmillan Co., 1944.

<sup>7</sup> Sterner, *Op. Cit.*

<sup>8</sup> This survey included part-time students and did not consider community activities. It also indicated that 25% of the students participated in so many activities that faculty members wondered if their participation was excessive.

# PROBLEM OF CORRELATING EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES WITH THE CURRICULUM

*Howard Kauffman Karl Mamanari*

By its very nature, a college must be concerned about the experiences which it makes available for its students. All of the experiences which are provided, the extra-curricular as well as the curricular, must contribute to the realization of the purposes of the institution if the college is to fulfill its task to the greatest extent.

Let us assume that in a given college the curriculum is contributing maximumly to the major purposes of the institution. The problem of correlating the extra-curricular activities with the curriculum in this instance is primarily the problem of making the extra-curricular activities also contribute maximumly to the major purposes of the school. That is, the basis for correlation between the curriculum and the "extra-curriculum" is a common philosophy. This philosophy is to be found in the basic purpose of the school. When both the curriculum and the "extra-curriculum" are geared so as to make possible the realization of the institution's purposes, then there is the basis for effective correlation between curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Goshen College has set up in tentative form the following statement of philosophy underlying the extra-curricular program of the College.

"Goshen College believes that all of the experiences of the student while he is in college are a part of his education. The objectives of the college are carried forward through the formal instruction program, through the administrative, personnel and other services, and through the extra-curricular program of the college. Therefore just as the college assumes responsibility for the curricular program, and for administrative, personnel and other services, the college also assumes responsibility for guiding the student's extra-curricular experiences so that they will contribute most effectively to the objectives of the college."

Assuming that a college has the basis for effective correlation between the curriculum and "extra-curriculum," there are then certain areas which need special attention if such correlation is to be implemented. In the paragraphs which follow three of these areas will be considered: (1) the work of the director of extra-curricular activities, (2) the work of the faculty sponsors, and (3) leadership training for students.

## **The Work of the Director of Extra-Curricular Activities**

Administratively, the key persons for correlating the curriculum and the "extra-curriculum" are the academic dean and the direc-

tor of the extra-curricular activities. In some colleges these two positions are held by the same person which of course facilitates correlation. However, this is not necessarily the most desirable arrangement.

In the recent E.C.A. Study made by Goshen College special attention was given to the role of the director. The study committee prepared a job analysis of such an assignment which included:

- a) directing and implementing regular self-study techniques for use by all organizations.
- b) issuing and reviewing charters of organizations.
- c) finding gaps in the extra-curricular program and implementing adjustments in the program.
- d) preparing questions and problems for submission to proper counseling groups.
- e) heading up central system on control of participation (e.g. minimum number of memberships, maximum number of memberships, duplication in leadership positions.)
- f) giving general direction and supervision to faculty sponsors (e.g. assigning sponsors, providing printed materials, in-service training, conferences.)
- g) implementing regular conferences for students and faculty leaders in extra-curricular program.
- h) studying the educational value of extra-curricular activities.
- i) providing in-service training for student officers (e.g. through better orientation, seminars, conferences.)
- j) supervision of counseling students regarding their choices of extra-curricular activities.
- k) coordination of extra-curricular with curricular.
- l) coordination with Personnel Office, (e.g. college calendar.)
- m) supervision of records and reports from extra-curricular organizations.
- n) serving as a coordinating center for all extra-curricular activities on the campus.

The extent to which the "extra-curriculum" correlates with the curriculum in any given college, is at least partially dependent upon the quality of leadership provided by the director of the extra-curricular activities and the vision he has for guiding the "extra-curriculum" so as to support and carry out the basic purposes of his school.

### **The Work of the Faculty-sponsors**

Second only to the work of the director of E.C.A. in providing correlation between the curriculum and the "extra-curriculum" is the work of the faculty sponsors of the various organizations. Important considerations with respect to this work include the following:

- a. Each sponsor should have an adequate understanding of and appreciation for the objectives of the organization which he guides.



- b. He should recognize that the organization which he sponsors is not just another means of accomplishing certain ends which he is attempting to achieve in his classes. That is, in the one he is in the foreground, while in the other he must remain in the background as regards planning and carrying out of activities.
- c. He should continually evaluate the goals and activities of the organization as over against the broader purposes of the college.
- d. He should strive to get students to make similar evaluations.

From the standpoint of the administration's relationship to faculty sponsors certain considerations need to be mentioned:

- a. While it is difficult to find objective criteria for measuring the amount of a faculty member's load, it is essential that the administration regard extra-curricular assignments as part of the total load of the instructor.
- b. The E.C.A. director should continually be finding ways and means of helping faculty sponsors do their jobs more effectively through in-service training and over-all guidance.

### Leadership Training for Students

A third area through which the matter of correlating the curriculum with the "extra-curriculum" can be implemented is the provision of leadership training for students. Since there is usually an annual turnover in most student leadership posts, such training is likely to be most effective if planned and carried out each year.

Several ends can be accomplished by setting up (conjointly with students, of course) an annual leadership conference. At Goshen, we called this meeting the Student Activities Conference. Among the ends to be achieved by such a conference are the provision of opportunities for students to:

- a) learn more about the basic principles of group leadership
- b) study and to put into practice group leadership skills and techniques
- c) become better acquainted with the total "extra-curriculum" of the college and its objectives as over against the broader purposes of the school
- d) study the objectives of the specific organization of which they are a representative in terms of the purposes of the total "extra-curriculum" and the college. At the last conference of this type which Goshen College held, students decided to carry on projects of organizational self-study. These self-studies were undertaken for the purpose of evaluating to what extent the expressed objectives and the actual objectives of the various E.C.A. contributed to the broader purposes of the College. These studies as yet have not been finally completed but the whole activity has created a desirable sensitivity to the problem in the minds of a number of students.

### Summary

In a sense, one should not distinguish between the curriculum and the "extra-curriculum" since both are merely convenient means for providing desirable educational experiences for students. All worth-while educational experiences therefore might be thought of as a part of the curriculum. However, it can be argued that there is some advantage administratively in making such a distinction. If the distinction is made there is the problem of correlating the two areas effectively. The basis for this correlation is to be found in the basic purpose of the school. Keeping both the curriculum and the "extra-curriculum" in tune with the purpose of the school makes effective correlation possible.

## OUTSIDE INFLUENCES ON MENNONITE THOUGHT

Harold S. Bender

"Although I am no Old-Mennonite myself, yet for years I have been tired, tired, tired of the outside influences and particularly foreign influences, and should like to call out urgently to all reformers (and I mean General Conference as well as Mennonite Brethren) especially to the leaders, to stop a little and ask yourselves, What is Mennonitism? Have we after all forgotten something which it would be good to relearn as a reaction against this endless new, new, new? Are we not perhaps losing a large or essential and good part of our Mennonite soul? What does God expect of us as a group?—That we, who call ourselves Mennonites, should become a conglomerate of Lutheran, Baptist, Plymouth Brethren, etc., etc., traits (I mean in our understanding and expressions of our Christianity)? What is the particular unique character which God has assigned to us through our original heritage of faith, our history, and our present situation? Assuredly we should now finally begin a little more seriously to study our past, as well as to evaluate our new acquisitions for their permanent value, throw away the false, properly integrate the good old and the good new" (P. M. Friesen, *Alt-Evang. Menn. Bruderschaft in Russland*, Halbstadt, 1911, p. 246).

These are not the words of a modern American Mennonite, but of a leading Mennonite minister and scholar in South Russia of forty years ago. But they serve well to introduce the discussion of outside influences on Mennonite thought. What P. M. Friesen felt so keenly in Russia, many of us feel today in North America. There are and have been outside influences bearing upon our Mennonite brotherhood. A striking illustration of this is the recent involvement of many Mennonites in the controversy over the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, a controversy imported into our ranks from the outside. It is good that we give attention to what these outside influences have done to our Mennonite thought and to what our attitude should be toward them.

In this brief consideration we shall have to limit the scope of inquiry geographically to North America, although the outside influences upon Mennonite thought in Europe have actually been more extensive and more significant. That the modification or abandonment on that continent of much of the early Anabaptist-Mennonite position is due to such influences is a commonplace. Socinianism, Pietism, Modernism, Lutheranism, nationalism, all have played a role and to some extent are still doing so among European Mennonites. The inroads of liberalism in Holland and

Northwest Germany in the 19th century, is an illustration of one aspect of this influence; the rise of the Mennonite Brethren schism in Russia in 1860 is another, and the recent affiliation of the Emmental Swiss Mennonite congregation with the Reformed Church of Bern a third. Robert Friedmann's study in *Mennonite Piety Through the Centuries* (1949) has awakened many of us to what pietistic influences have done to our German and Swiss Mennonite churches, and in a measure to the American Mennonites who descend from them. But we shall have more than enough to occupy our time in treating the developments in North America and limit this inquiry accordingly.

The consideration of this subject is beset with many difficulties, so that the conclusions offered in this pioneer study must be considered as tentative only. The first difficulty is that of breadth of the field of inquiry. There are many Mennonite groups in modern America, with a variety of backgrounds and a diverse spiritual history. Their exposure to outside influences has varied, and their present state is not uniform. The paucity of documentary materials is another handicap. And how can one be certain as to the exact relationship of cause and effect as changes take place? Moreover what precisely was the original Anabaptist-Mennonite theology and ethic? Much has been done to clarify it, but the final formulation is still not complete. How may we know what of present Mennonite thought comes from the original deposit of faith, and what has been added from the outside? At times we seem to be almost in the position of the mathematician or chemist who has an end-product or formula, but not knowing any of the factors which produced it seeks to discover what they were by examining the product itself. May we assume as some have done that certain groups, the most conservative of today such as Old Order Amish and Old Colony Mennonites have remained unchanged and can be used as control groups by which to test the changes of the others? Or is it also possible that the state of some of these groups, today represents deterioration and degeneration, and not at all the original from which they came? Again, how many of our present Mennonite behavior patterns in thought and spirit are really distinctively and genetically Mennonite, and how many are general German culture traits or simply rural culture traits, or even just Americanisms? Some Mennonites who have introduced new thought have assumed and testified that they found their new ideas in the Scripture, when possibly they really received them from forgotten outside sources, perchance a book, a sermon, a passing conversation, a school class, which they may have overlooked or naively ignored. Who is able to be critical of his own creativity? Is it of God or of man? And of what men?

Such a study makes heavy demands upon the one who undertakes it. In effect it calls for a spiritual history of the entire



brotherhood against the background of which the changes can be plotted and their sources and consequences laid bare. But it is just in this area that our Mennonite scholarship has been most remiss, both in quantity and in depth and objectivity. Our historians have given us many accounts of migration and settlements, much institutional and organizational history, narratives of persecution and martyrdom, description of activities, but where is the history of Mennonite theology and piety, of the inner life of our brotherhood?

But this study requires almost as wide a knowledge of the history of Protestant thought and piety as of our own. What are the outside forces and movements of thought which may have influenced us and still bear upon us? Mennonites, as they come out of their isolation, increasingly borrow vocabulary, ideas, and meanings from the Protestant world which surrounds us. If we are not to be wholly naive in the assumption that we have created all this by ourselves, we shall have to carefully determine the amount of assimilation to general Protestantism which has already taken place.

And then, there is the requirement of more than passing familiarity with the sociological process and particularly with what is today called the sociology of religion. More than a suspicion is warranted that much of what passes for spiritual or religious change has actually been sociological, or at least sociologically caused, with reflex action on theology. Traditions are buttressed with religious explanations and sanctions created *ex post facto* and *ad hoc*. With a strong Biblicism in our tradition, some of us have sought in the Bible grounds for the validity of social and economic practices, regulations on costume, beards, boots, and bonnets, and much more. The battle to maintain our small groups and their distinctive way of life in a hostile world, which has both subtly and strongly, and often openly and vehemently attacked us, has led us to arm ourselves with much more than the Bible and faith in God, and rightly so. But then we must understand ourselves rightly in order to explain all that has happened to us and account correctly for what we now are.

### Some Things That Are Not So

Some current complacent assumptions about ourselves and outside influences must be challenged. One of these is that "my group" has not been affected by outside influence, that "we" are still what our forefathers were, and that the sanction of antiquity inheres to all our current practices and beliefs; this is group ignorance. Another is that our unique Mennonite emphases are all original with us and have never found expression in Christian history before or even now elsewhere; this is group pride. Another

is that we in our generation have found the final answers in application of principles and solution of problems and hence do not need to change; this is current generation pride. We should disabuse ourselves also of the notion that cultural Mennonitism has anything to do with the essence of real Anabaptist-Mennonitism. Agricultural contributions, economic achievements, strong family and community life, in which we sometimes glory, are all worthy and fine, but they can be completely devoid of any spiritual and Christian meaning or connection, and are not of the essence. They can be most materialistic and carnal, a substitute for real religion and true discipleship. And when we compare what is at times a stolid, cold, self-satisfied, materialistic or tradition-bound and culture-conformist Mennonitism of today with the original aggressive, creative, nonconformist first generation and first century Anabaptism we can well discern that a great change has taken place. Some outside influences that have come to bear upon us are nearer to original Anabaptism than we ourselves now are.

### The Channels of Outside Influence

How have the outside influences penetrated our brotherhood? Protective barriers have been thrown up, such as the German language, solid group settlement, geographical and cultural isolation, prohibition of intermarriage, which have prevented this penetration in varying degrees for all groups and in some cases for long periods and almost completely.

1. Personal and neighborly contacts have often played a part in North America, in contrast to Russia where the geographical and cultural isolation, aided by the language difference, was complete.

2. More influence has come through literature-books, tracts, periodicals. The very lack of Mennonite literature has contributed to this. In early Pennsylvania it was largely German pietistic literature, both imports and American reprints. Later the Sunday school movement brought its expository and other literature, and still does, into home and church. Many Mennonites still feed heavily on "lesson helps" of others, on periodicals like the *S.S. Times* and the David C. Cook publications. Devotional books by the thousands, millennialistic literature, Bible Institute periodicals, the Scofield Bible, to be found in many places. Most of our denominational bookstores and publishing houses carry a vast amount of outside literature, much of it offered without discrimination or concern as to the "strange" doctrines sometimes imported by this route.

3. In recent times the omnipresent radio with its popular religious programs of varying type, has become a major channel of direct influence. There is evidence that very many Mennonites

listen to and support a variety of speakers and doctrines which comes to them over the air.

4. Schools have been and continue to be a common channel for outside influences. The public elementary and high schools play their part through textbooks, teachers, atmosphere, association. But much more influential are colleges and universities which train leaders. Even Mennonite colleges and schools can become "transmission belts" for "foreign" ideas. Perhaps most influential have been non-Mennonite Bible Institutes and theological schools, which have been and still are training their dozens of young Mennonites. Moody's and Los Angeles Bible Institutes were once largely patronized by Mennonites, though not so much recently. But several Bible Schools in Western Canada have secured an astonishing patronage from the German-speaking immigrant groups from Russia, of both older and newer immigrations.

5. Interdenominational Bible conferences have attracted some Mennonites, and outside speakers have been brought into Mennonite communities to speak in local congregations or regional Mennonite Bible conferences. This occurred already in Russia, where the direct influence of certain Baptist, Pietist, and Plymouth Brethren "Bible teachers" was large (Wuest, Baedeker, Stroeter, Broadband).

6. Another source of influence has been interdenominational cooperative endeavors, such as Sunday school conferences, evangelistic campaigns, International Relations Institutes, Civilian Public Service, and the National Association of Evangelicals.

This brief review of the most common channels of outside influence may serve to emphasize the multiplicity and variety of the influences and the persistence with which they invade our brotherhood in North America. For most of us the day of any sort of isolation is wholly past. We are increasingly in the midst of the stream of American life and religious influence, and no doubt many would not have it otherwise. The Apostle Paul says, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." But if we are not to be overwhelmed by these outside influences, and "hold fast (only) what is good," we must be strong within. Unless our spiritual and intellectual power is sufficiently great, outside forces will override us. We must deliberately and consciously hold our own, not indiscriminately, but intelligently, and we must have the necessary resources and means to do this. Here the lack of a trained leadership with a self-conscious and purposeful theological line of our own, historically and biblically grounded, has been a great danger in the past, and still is in certain quarters. To have a trained leadership is not enough; for such a leadership trained by others and indoctrinated by them, may itself become the channel of outside influence, and be more effective in causing change because



of this very training. Much better to have an untrained lay ministry loyal to our historic faith and purpose, than one that betrays us, however able it may be.

### The Consequences of Outside Influence

1. Without doubt the welcome awakening, revitalizing, and activating which has come into American Mennonitism in the past two generations has been due in large part to outside influences. The sorry state of those groups which have remained isolated and closed may serve to remind us of what we might all be had we not opened up. The Mennonite Brethren awakening in Russia (1860ff) had its distinct beneficent effect upon all Russian Mennonitism directly or indirectly, and most of the immigrant groups to North America reflect this. The "great awakening" of 1880-1910 among the (Old) Mennonites in the eastern half of the United States and Canada is another illustration. The recovery of a sense of mission, closely related to the rise of the missionary and philanthropic movement among North American Mennonites since 1900, which has finally reached even such conservative groups as the Church of God in Christ, the Kleine Gemeinde, and the Conservative Amish (there is now even a missionary movement among the Old Order Amish), is a vital part of this general awakening and activation. But it includes much more: a more vital type of preaching, emphasis upon religious experience including conversion, more active participation of the laity in the life of the church, new methods of work, etc. And the transformation is not yet complete—the process is continuing and growing. Our Sunday schools, revival meetings, evangelism, youth work, all this and more has come largely from outside Protestant sources.

2. Another change worthy of note is that from a traditional, simple almost to the point of naive, purely "Biblicistic" type of thought and attitude to a more consciously intellectual, theologizing, purposeful type. This is true both of the more "fundamentalistic" inclined groups and others. It is due in part to our own schools but also to the training of leadership, and the rising educational level of the entire membership.

3. There has also been a change in type of piety in some quarters to a more subjectivistic, emotional, introspective and even mystical type. Some whole groups have moved strongly in this direction. The change in piety has been accompanied by (or even influenced by) a shift in the center of theological emphasis in these same quarters from obedience and discipleship to the inner experience of justification and sanctification interpreted in other narrow ways, and with also a certain amount of theological transactionism.

4. There has also been the invasion of the speculative-apocalyptic



emphasis and interest together with the adoption of certain chiliasitic views and allegorical biblical interpretation.

5. Along with these changes certain new doctrines, previously unknown in Mennonite circles in either Europe or America have been developed. In this development it is worthy of note that Russian and North American Mennonitism have much in common, though it must be remembered that this applies in both cases to a minority only. Here are some of the doctrinal importances: baptism by immersion, open communion, second work of grace, entire sanctification, eternal security, premillennialism, dispensationalism. Some groups have adopted one or more of these doctrines officially; some have merely tolerated deviations. Sometimes schisms have resulted, and again strong attachments and close fellowship have been formed with outside groups. None of the above-mentioned imported doctrines are to be found in any historic Mennonite confession of faith, and they never were a part of original Anabaptist-Mennonite theology or practice.

6. On the other hand certain specific and historic Mennonite doctrines have been partially or wholly lost, although such loss is not always due wholly to outside influences. Nonresistance, for instance, is clearly on its way out in certain groups and sections unless drastic action is taken to retain it. Our doctrine of the church has been gravely compromised in the direction of (a) individualism versus brotherhood, (b) mysticism and laxity versus discipline, (c) non-denominationalism, (d) denominationalism of the wrong type versus a brotherhood church, (e) professionalism in the ministry. The inter-related doctrines of separation, nonconformity and simplicity have been seriously diluted. And often while these doctrines have not been actually fully lost, there has nevertheless come confusion, uncertainty, and easy toleration of deviation.

7. Certain groups have been lost altogether to the Mennonite brotherhood, such as the Missionary Church Association and the United Missionary Church, and others are in danger of being lost. In some cases individual congregations have withdrawn from their conference affiliations and all Mennonite connections.

### General Evaluation

The process of change, much of it under the powerful impact of outside forces, has gone far in our world Mennonite brotherhood. *European Mennonitism* viewed as a whole is seriously adrift, confused and disunited (I speak not organizationally but theologically). There is no common Mennonite theology or piety across the continent, Dutch-North German, South German, French, Swiss. There is liberalism here, Pietism there, traditionalism elsewhere, but too little self-conscious, historically grounded, coherent, solid

Anabaptist-Mennonitism. There is some of this, to be sure, and there are signs of a growing reorientation in this direction, from Holland to Switzerland. The "message" of the Fifth Mennonite World Conference issued at Basel in 1952 with unanimous support is one token of this.

*American Mennonitism* on the whole is still sound at the core, has to a large extent recovered its sense of connection with its great past, has developed a large capacity for self-criticism and understanding of its own problems and needs, and in general has a good balance of faith and works, inner experience and evangelistic outreach and witnessing. It has retained much of the essence of its historic Anabaptist-Mennonite faith, and learned how to correct its own aberrations and accumulated deficiencies. This judgment does not apply universally, to be sure.

I hold further that American Mennonitism is just coming into a great age—its golden age. There is much evidence of God's working in our midst. If we hold our historic course, release a dynamic spirituality, maintain a clear theological line, and yield to God's purpose, greater things can be accomplished than hitherto by the entire brotherhood. "I have set before thee an open door."

There are, however, also grave dangers ahead. (1) Fundamentalism must be rejected as was Liberalism and Modernism. (2) The doctrines of nonresistance and nonconformity must be restored, rehabilitated and made fully relevant to our modern situation. They dare not be mere traditions, but must be intelligent, Scripturally grounded convictions. (3) Full discipleship can and should become the organizing core of our faith, grounded in God's gracious call and redemption, derived from the divine lordship and saviorhood of Christ, supported by the absolute authority of the Word of God, made dynamic in today's world. It dare not be supplanted or smothered by an excessive emotionalism or a barren theologizing. (4) The twin though opposite dangers of traditionalism and worldliness are constant threats which must be exorcized. (5) The rampant materialism so widely evident, with its easy-going acceptance of modern capitalistic methods and spirit, must be cured. (6) We must have, however, a clearly thought out and consistent theological line, not a mixture of confused theologies borrowed from other groups and movements. Let us work together for this. Let us take the lesson from other groups, such as the Church of the Brethren, who are in a considerable dilemma in several respects because of their failure to do this very thing in their theology. It is easy for a whole brotherhood to lose its way. Let it not happen to us.

What will be the future course of American Mennonitism is not wholly clear, but I am not pessimistic. It will be determined largely by the three major groups—the Mennonite Church (Old) with its

72,000 members (including Conservative Amish), the General Conference Mennonite Church with 51,000 members, and the Mennonite Brethren Church with 20,000 members. Together these groups constitute 143,000 members. In strong contrast to them are the isolationist groups with 30,000 members, namely, Old Order Amish, Old Colony Mennonites, Old Order Mennonites. Then there are the smaller groups of varying character, Evangelical Mennonites (two types, U. S. A. group and Canadian group), Krimmer Mennonite Brethren, Rudnerweide, with another 10,000 members. All three of the above major groups are now subject to disintegrative forces and damaging outside influences. Fundamentalism is currently the greatest danger, particularly for the Mennonite Brethren and a section of the General Conference group. But I believe with all my heart that we as a whole brotherhood with each other's help will find our way through to a continuing vigorous, thoroughly Mennonite, evangelical brotherhood, profiting from the best that comes to us from the outside, rejecting the harmful, moving forward in our witness and ministry in accord with God's historic purpose for us since 1525.

## AN EVALUATION OF MENNONITE SOCIAL WELFARE INSTITUTIONS

Andrew R. Shelly

Today there are more than sixty institutions among Mennonites in North America in what might be termed the social welfare field. The categories studied include old people's homes, general hospitals, mental hospitals, children's homes, girl's homes, and invalid homes. All of these institutions were organized within the past sixty years, and the majority of them within the past twenty-five years.

This tremendous growth of awareness of the need for institutional care in the area of social welfare deserves close study. It is necessary to understand at least the basic elements of their historic development. An attempt must also be made to analyze the present status of these institutions.

This study is confined entirely to the United States and Canada. An attempt has been made to study all institutions which can broadly be defined as Mennonite. The line of demarcation is not always clear. For example, in some cases a hospital may be a county hospital in almost a totally Mennonite county. Thus, while all on the Board of Directors are Mennonites they have been elected not as Mennonites but because they are citizens of a particular political subdivision. Yet, the fact of the presence of the hospital is noteworthy, and a fruitful study could be made of this phase alone.

When the first Mennonites settled in America in 1683, they did not think of institutions: their concern was survival. The first concerns of the early settlers institutionally were homes, churches and schools. This was also true in later migrations of Mennonites into Canada in the 19th Century.

It appears that Mennonites in America did not develop mission work through organized effort before the late 1800's. Many other missionary societies were in existence decades before the first Mennonite missionary left for foreign soil. In the late 1800's we also note the emergence of schools and colleges. The realization of the need for participation in higher education was slow in coming. Indeed, for some groups of Mennonites it is still not here.

The third area in this trilogy of institutional developments in the late 19th century was the area of social welfare. As far as this writer can discover the first *bona fide* Mennonite welfare institution to be established was the Home for the Aged at Frederick, Pennsylvania, in 1896. In 1898, a Children's Home was established at Flanagan, Illinois. In 1908 the first hospital was



begun in Newton, Kansas, and in 1937 the first Mennonite mental hospital was opened at Vineland, Ontario.

It is not within the confines of this study to answer the historical "why" in regard to a late awakening of a sense of social concern. For one thing, we might state that we were not alone in a narrow concept of the gospel message as being only relevant to the salvation of souls. It is well known that during the time of unspeakable conditions in England when little children worked ten to fourteen hours a day in dirty, cold, coal mines, church leaders took a callous "hands off" attitude. Figuratively shrugging their shoulders, they said that this was no concern of theirs, their task was to preach the gospel.

Gradually this attitude has changed. A study of the Bible has unmistakably pointed to the fact that to separate the spiritual elements from the rest of life is error. Further, the ministry of Jesus has demonstrated conclusively that a concern for the welfare of others is not only legitimate, but necessary, for His followers.

The legitimacy of social concern has been slow in breaking through conservative Christianity. Men like Walter Rauchenbush and Frances Peabody had an early concern, but they can hardly be classified within the confines of conservative thinking. Carl F. H. Henry has perhaps been the first of the better-known conservative leaders to speak out on the relevance of the gospel to social action.

One more trend should be pointed out. I refer to the trend in medicine, psychology and religion of recognizing a direct relationship between the body, mind and soul. This has revolutionized our appraisal of mental illness. It has enlarged our concept of the gospel in meeting human needs.

Another point of significance is the growing trend of relating certain aspects of environment to bodily, mental and spiritual health. Thus, a concern regarding slums is not only a concern for the temporary comfort of human beings, but has a relevance to these deeper issues.

### **Mennonite Welfare Institutions**

This study involves sixty-two institutions of which fifty-eight have answered the basic questionnaire. The basic questionnaire involved thirty-two questions in six categories. These divisions were: general information, personnel, finances, Christian "plus" factor, regulations and activities and future and suggestions.

### **Old People's Homes**

There appear to be twenty-seven Old People's Homes. Of these, fourteen are under rather direct control of the church. Four

Mennonite conferences have Old People's Homes: These are: General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite General Conference (Old), Mennonite Brethren and Church of God in Christ. The other thirteen homes are mostly of a private corporation type, although most of these corporations are composed of Mennonites. In some cases, various groups of Mennonites are represented in the communities where the homes are located.

The oldest home among Mennonites is located at Frederick, Pennsylvania, and is under the direct supervision of the Eastern District Conference of the General Conference. The largest home is the Mennonite Home at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, operated by the Lancaster Conference Mennonites with a capacity of 138. The most recent home is located at Mordon, Manitoba, which was opened on October 12, 1952.

The combined capacity of the twenty-six homes is 953, or an average capacity of 36.5 per home. The actual occupancy the first week of April, 1953, was 877. Of these, 877, 63 per cent, or 536 were Mennonites.

The total valuation of these homes in 1953 was approximately \$1,756,000. Eleven homes reported financial campaigns for 1953. The total they hoped to raise was \$186,665.26. Much of this is for building funds. It is interesting to note that a number of homes are entirely self-supporting as to operating expenses. Notable among those is the Mennonite Home at Lancaster which operates at a profit leaving a margin for building expansion.

It is interesting to note that there is no noticeable conscience on the matter of accepting public funds for the operation of the institution. In some cases, it appears that Old Age Pensions and county grants practically finance the operation of the institution.

Only three homes publish a special paper. These are the homes at Eureka, Illinois; Goessel, Kansas; and Newton, Kansas. Seven homes reported the services of a regular minister. In answer to the question regarding Christian emphasis, practically all listed a number of special services such as daily devotions and Sunday services.

### General Hospitals

Hospitals are more difficult to analyze in a study of this kind. The fourteen hospitals studied have a capacity of 693. The actual occupancy the first week in April, 1953, was 499, (average used for those not reporting occupancy). Of these, 23 per cent or 115 were Mennonites. A total of 630 are reported to be working in our hospitals.

The total valuation of our general hospitals in 1953 was \$4,816,842. Plans for 1953 call for raising \$145,000 in donations. To evaluate

financial aspects of hospitals is difficult because they tend to be more community in nature than old people's homes.

The expression of Christian witness varies. For example, a city hospital catering to the general public tends to depend on ministers of the various denominations for the spiritual welfare of their patients. One administrator writes: "Our hospital is a Christian hospital with no apologies. We try to employ only Christians and expect them to live and work as such. We are interested in the spiritual as well as physical well-being of our patients." This administrator feels that the church should look more directly on hospital work as a form of home missionary work. He sums up by saying: "The church is placing too little emphasis upon general hospitals and hospitals have been going along too independently of the church."

### Mental Hospitals

Without fear of the charge of exaggeration one can state that the most significant development in Mennonite institutional interest in recent years has been in the field of mental hospitals. A large part of the concern is traceable to C.P.S. experience during the second world war. The first Mennonite mental hospital was established in Russia.

The first Mennonite mental hospital in North America was established at Vineland, Ontario, in 1937, by the Mennonite Brethren Conference of Canada. Today they have a thriving work with a capital investment of \$195,000. Their capacity is 53 patients. Average Mennonite occupancy is 75 per cent.

The second mental hospital to be established was the one at Brook Lane Farm, Hagerstown, Maryland. Sponsored by MCC, the first patient was admitted in January of 1949. The 1953 capacity was 29. The total investment during that year was \$96,838. At the time of this survey the percentage of Mennonites cared for at Brook Lane was 21.7 per cent. The opening of Philhaven Hospital by the Lancaster Conference in 1952 has decreased the number of Mennonite patients at Brook Lane.

Kings View Hospital at Reedley, California, was the third mental hospital opened. The financial investment at the time of this study was \$165,000. This hospital, operated by MCC, was opened in February, 1951.

In May, 1952, the Lancaster Conference Mennonites opened a thirty-five bed hospital at Lebanon, Pennsylvania, with 75 per cent being Mennonites. The valuation in 1953 was \$305,000.

The final mental hospital to be operated by MCC is Prairie View Hospital now under construction at Newton, Kansas. The capacity will be forty beds and the cost is estimated at \$250,000. It is planned later to increase the capacity to 100.



### Child Welfare Institutions

The fourth division of social welfare institutions within the range of our study is child welfare. While the history of child welfare work goes back almost as far as any institutional activity, there are only six child welfare agencies operating at the present time. The total capacity of these six is 258 and the occupancy the first week of April, 1953, was 213. As might be expected the percentage of Mennonites is the lowest in this category—4.5 per cent.

The oldest children's home is in Flanagan, Illinois, opened in 1896. This home is also the largest with a capacity of ninety. In 1898, the home at West Liberty, Ohio, opened. The other homes are located at Rosthern, Saskatchewan; Kansas City, Missouri; and Henderson, Nebraska. Grace Children's Home at Henderson is an independent Mennonite home. Also under this category we list the Mennonite Youth Village which is primarily a summer camp program.

### Girl's Homes

Girl's homes have been in existence since 1925. Five homes have been included in this study. From one no information has been received. In addition the Mennonite Girl's Center in Goshen, Indiana, should be mentioned.

The homes in Canada arose largely to meet the problems incumbent to immigration. They opened very soon after the migrations of the 1920s. Girls went to Western cities of Canada for employment. Their economic and spiritual welfare demanded attention. The first home was opened in Winnipeg in 1925, by the Mennonite Brethren Conference. The following year the General Conference opened one in the same city. Through the years these homes performed a valuable ministry as is attested by the fact that more than 5,000 girls were helped in the two Winnipeg homes alone.

Other girl's homes in Canada are as follows: Saskatoon, Saskatchewan (G.C.); Calgary, Alberta (G.C.) and Vancouver, B. C. (G.C. and M.B.). Today the total capacity of the girl's homes in Canada is about 85. With the process of acculturation and integration in Canada becoming more complete, the need for girl's homes is less acute. However, owing to recent waves of immigration when more than 7,000 Mennonites came to Canada, the need for help in our large cities is still evident.

The girl's homes probably have their main ministry now in being a fellowship center with adult workers serving in an advisory capacity as counsellors. For example, in Calgary, Alberta, while the capacity is only 12, there are at least 50 girls in the city to whom the "center" and church ministers.

In the United States girl's homes in Reading, Pennsylvania, and



Goshen, Indiana, have been reported. In a lengthy explanation giving the history and ministry of the home in Reading, the present matron stated it is still thought of as a girl's home by many, but was really a "mission home."

### Invalid Homes

The last category to be discussed is the care of invalids in two invalid homes in Canada. So far as this writer is aware, these are the only two institutions of this kind among Mennonites. One of the amazing developments among Mennonites is the Mennonite Youth Farm at Rosthern, Saskatchewan. A government experimental farm was purchased in 1943. The invalid home was opened in May, 1944. Today there is a fifty-three guest capacity, with the occupancy the first week of May standing at fifty-six. In this home, 75 per cent of the invalids are Mennonites.

In addition to the invalid home, there is also a children's home, a crippled children's home just opening, and plans to build a mental hospital on the same property. Also, from this center goes forth an active missionary program. Annual retreats are held here.

In 1946 a unique property transaction transpired in Canada. The Labor Progressive Party of Canada (Communist) had a beautiful estate along the Red River, about ten miles from Winnipeg. The Mennonites purchased 110 acres, with lovely buildings, for \$20,000. On this property an Invalid Home and Old People's Home is operated. An interesting observation a visitor makes in visiting these two institutions is the number of young people serving. Many young people serve for several years in these institutions. An unmistakable impression is the devotion with which they do their work.

### EVALUATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

After establishing facts and trends in any movement, it is necessary to interpret them as a basis for forming future judgments. What do we learn from a study of sixty-two social welfare institutions sponsored by Mennonites? Are there some special questions which need our attention? Is there some way by which we can determine the extent to which the church ought to go into these ventures?

We have chosen to divide this last part into three sections. First, we discuss five background questions. Then, we wish to point to a suggestive five-fold priority in determining institutional expansion. Finally, we raise five specific questions.

### Background Problems

We need to study the social welfare institutions in the larger context of the problems they represent. Thus, it is not sufficient to

study old people's homes: one must also be aware of the total problem of the growing number of older people in our country. Obviously, we are not only concerned about the approximately 1,000 older people who can be taken care of in our institutions.

The growing awareness in recent times of the inadequacy of our consideration of the problems of age is startling and wholesome. Many books have made their appearance on life in the later stages and working with older people. A year ago a new magazine was put on the market dedicated to "Lifetime Living," which is the title of this publishing venture dedicated to those over forty years of age. In short, the thesis of the magazine is that old age is not just a time to await death, but life is meant to be lived to the full to the end.

Further, the achievements of many older people—such as Winston Churchill, Herbert Hoover, Albert Einstein, John R. Mott and many others—demonstrate the wastefulness of assuming that at an arbitrary age, as 65, a person's usefulness has run out.

In the work of the church more and more attention has been given to a study of the role of older people. In addition to children's and youth activities, we need to harness the accumulated wisdom and present time and energy of older people. With the many needs of the church ways should be found to use all to the maximum throughout life.

The predictions of population experts are startling. In 1900, three million persons, or 4.1 per cent of the population was 65 or over. In 1952, there are thirteen million, or 8.4 per cent. It has been estimated that by 1975, 10.4 per cent of the population, or 20,800,000 will be sixty-five years old or over.

It is abundantly clear the problems of age will not be solved by institutional care alone. We could apply the same principles to a study of health—mental and physical. The gospel has a greater relevance to these things than can be expressed in institutions. Startling progress has been made in the past several decades in a study of the relation of religion to health. The concept Jesus preached—the wholeness of personality—is being more widely accepted and applied. There are those who believe that if the Christian church generally had been more alert to see this relevance, the organized movement known as Christian Science might never have arisen.

Carroll A. Wise quotes Dr. Strecker, as saying: "It is not an overstatement to say that fully fifty per cent of the problems of the acute stages of an illness and seventy-five per cent of the difficulties of convalescence have their primary origin not in the body, but in the mind, of the patient." (*Religion in Illness and Health*, Harper, p. 11).

The trend toward more adequate counselling service in our institutions is good. However, the work toward maintaining health and avoiding disorders is also important. Through preaching, the Sunday school, young people's work, other organizations, fellowship gatherings, etc., alert church leadership can frequently lead people over difficult periods of fear, worry, frustration and anxiety—which if unchecked could lead to more serious and permanent maladjustment.

It has been disturbing to learn that in Saskatchewan the percentage of inmates in the Provincial Hospital who belong to Mennonite churches is in direct proportion to general population figures. As Frank Peters of Kitchener, Ontario, points out in a recent issue of *Evangelical Action*, the church must proclaim more aggressively God's goodness, love and forgiveness. The same principle can be applied to children's welfare work, and other social welfare movements.

We need to study the social welfare institutions in the larger context of the total work of the church. In response to the question put to the administrators and superintendents regarding the need for their type of service and their feeling as to the function of the church in meeting the need, there was unanimous agreement.

One administrator put the problem thus: "A concern that is becoming very much a part of me is where the welfare program is going to lead us. With added responsibilities in relief, missions, schools (with pressure towards expensive parochial schools), and care of the aged, we will find it increasingly necessary to see the relationships of the various aspects of social service to our mission challenge. Perhaps we are doing as well as we can by each board, each administrator plugging for his field."

But, we need more: we must see the picture as a whole. Some will say that if people give as they ought, we can meet all the needs. But, this is not true. Obviously, we must draw the line somewhere in relief work. We cannot meet the needs of all old people in our areas. Living in Chicago, I know we cannot meet the needs of all children who need help. We could use almost unlimited funds on our many mission fields. What will we say of education? Certainly, those of us who believe in the influence of leadership will need to place strong emphasis on the need for our educational institutions. Further, we mention the "Jerusalem and Judea" aspects of our witness—our own communities. We dare not neglect them. The local church must be supported.

Last year I made a study of General Conference income. While not done in line with strict scientific procedures, I came to the conclusion that the total was between \$70,000,000 and \$75,000,000. The tithe would be \$7,000,000. As far as I could estimate our people probably gave for all causes \$3,500,000 to \$4,000,000 in 1951.



Dr. Melvin Gingerich has made a far more accurate study of Old Mennonite income. His estimate for the Old Mennonite church for 1951 was somewhat in excess of \$90,000,000. His estimate of the giving of the members is \$3,430,271.06.

Among other things, this analysis revealed conclusively that more money is available for expansion in all our endeavors. We have not been consistent and vigorous enough in our presentation of stewardship responsibilities. Churches which have had a high per capita giving record have been stressing the Scriptural tithes and offerings strongly. Recently, *Mennonite Weekly Review* carried a report indicating the United Missionary Church in Kitchen-er, Ont., had a \$110 per member average for their fiscal year.

However, as true as these observations are, we do not have money enough for unlimited expansion in every direction of need. Many people are frustrated with the many urgent appeals, which appear to be promoted without co-ordination. One man in desperation told me I was the twelfth person in a short period of time to come personally to his farm to ask for money. This did not include any relief, mission or local church causes. Are we defeating part of our purpose in a lack of stewardship interpretation in relation to our appeals?

We need to study the social welfare institutions in the larger context of our relation and responsibility to general institutions ministering to these areas of need. It is the same problem we face in education: namely, the extent to which we work toward a solution of the issue through parochial schools, and the degree to which we have a responsibility toward public education.

In some areas of institutional work, it appears clear that a better solution is a community pattern of organization. The number of community type hospitals and old people's homes has been increasing. In Hillsboro, Kansas, should each group of Mennonites, and the community as a whole, each sponsor a hospital and old people's home? Or, is it right that these institutions are now community agencies? In one institution I visited, the superintendent is a Seventh Day Adventist. After gaining the information, she zealously and glowingly gave me two pieces of literature for her witness to me.

Do we have a responsibility toward larger institutions of these types? Shall all our young people give themselves to our own institutions? Is there a witness consideration in other institutions? In some areas it appears the answer is clear. It would appear, at least to this writer, that although there are sixty-one Mennonite inmates in the Provincial Hospital at North Battleford, our best contribution is the core of Mennonite workers we have there. It would appear to me that the expenditure necessary to build a mental hospital at North Battleford would be unwarranted. How-



ever, certainly we need to give more attention to mental hospitals sponsored by the Mennonite Church. This is one of the clearest conclusions arising from this study.

We need to face one of the constantly recurring problems of a group tending to be somewhat isolationist. In the business world, we are forced to enter the "stream." In many cases we have developed schizophrenic ethical standard—while insisting on some aspects of isolation in institutional life lest we become contaminated, we accept the standards of the business world. One lifelong Mennonite, a businessman, was complaining vigorously to me regarding a lack of separation in a particular church matter. I asked him frankly what the difference was between a Mennonite, Christian businessman and another businessman. He had to admit it was all too little. The issue is not whether we will have no institutions or whether we will become entirely absorbed in larger institutions: it is one of degree and one of our emphasis and attitudes.

We need to study our social welfare institutions in the larger context of our motive. Specifically, the question is: to what extent is our motive "to take care of our own" and to what extent is our motive to help solve a general, basic problem of society?

It appears that fifty-five per cent of the guests in old people's homes are Mennonites. Twenty-nine per cent of those in hospitals are Mennonites, while only 4.5 per cent of the children cared for come from Mennonite homes.

From this study it would appear that basically the needs of Mennonites are taken care of. However, in many cases, an equal responsibility is felt toward the community at large.

The basic dilemma was brought in sharp focus at a session of Eastern District Conference in Pennsylvania. A minister pointed out that an old member needed a home very badly, but the Conference home was full. He asked whether it was right to fill the same with those of other denominations and leave one of our members suffer. The discussion led to a motion that at all times one room should be vacant. It didn't occur to anyone that the motion could not be carried out; for when the vacant room would become occupied there would no longer be a vacant one. It does appear, however, true that one basic motive for our institutions should be to "take care of our own." Further, we must prayerfully seek guidance as to the extent to which we should serve the general population.

We need to study our social welfare institutions, in the larger context of leadership for them. This question has at least three facets. For one thing, if we operate these institutions we should make fuller provision for recruitment of leadership. We are making progress in this realm. But, it is still very unusual for a

college student to declare he is preparing to devote his life to leadership in one of these institutions.

Another aspect of the problem is our attitude toward leaders in these fields. One influential Mennonite has stated that he believes money ought not to be a consideration for those in old people's home work: it ought to be service. (In his own business he is very prosperous). On the other hand, a superintendent of one of our homes, states he feels workers should be paid well. His interpretation of this is \$100 a month, full room and board with good vacation provisions. His concept is that the work is a lifetime service and deserves a living wage.

Have we been promoting a dual standard? Have we been assuming that workers in some institutions should live on a very low salary and those in general business on a higher standard? The answer is not lavish wages, but it does appear that to make lifetime service possible, the sacrifice ought to be spread over a larger group.

The final question in this category is the degree to which voluntary service workers ought to be used. Some institutions are enthusiastic about this prospect: others, feel it is not feasible. It appears this area deserves more study: a plan whereby young people could give one or more years in this type of service.

### Priorities

Are there guideposts in determining policy in the expansion and co-ordination in our efforts in the social welfare field? In an absolute sense, the answer must be "no." Someone has said that the search for absolute truth is like a fountain confidently sending its water to the sky, but falling down in tears. There is no absolute way to know precisely how much should be attempted in each area of witness. However, there certainly are guideposts. We can at least establish some principles in the form of priorities.

1. The distinct relevance of the gospel. It is true that the gospel has relevance to all of life. Yet, some areas have a greater relevance than others. For example, if a priority must be established we would probably admit that the gospel has a greater relevance in the case of the removal of a deep-seated fear than in the removal of an appendix. Since the church operates within limitations, it seems logical and right that high priority be given to those areas of witness most directly relevant to the application of the gospel.

2. Service in relation to outlay in money. An administrator of a hospital points to this principle in part when he writes: "Most communities can bear the financial burdens of their local hospital but I believe that Mennonite hospitals must depend upon the

Mennonite church for its personnel to give the kind of witness the church expects." Another response reads as follows: "It seems to me that the church has just begun in this type of work. Our own church has been approached again and again to operate county owned hospitals. We will be taking over two new hospitals in the next twenty-four months and many requests have been turned down because of lack of personnel."

The opportunity to provide Christian personnel in public financed institutions deserves more study. Moreover in some places governments are willing to subsidize new construction. For example, in Ontario, Canada, the government offers to pay \$1,000 per bed for new construction in old people's homes. This is approximately one-third of the total cost. Thus, in some areas of Christian witness, the outlay of money can be decreased.

This same principle also applies in a consideration of institutions which after construction can be self-supporting. One superintendent of an old people's home feels his home is answering needs to the full. Yet, this home is entirely self-supporting. No appeals are made to the church for funds. However, the church did build the institution. It appears expansions in this area, which give long-range witness potentials through consecrated personnel, are feasible. Also, the overhead as compared to the service given is perhaps lower in some institutions than others.

3. The strategic need for the service. The caliber of an institution in one community may not be the same as that in another. Thus, in one community a Mennonite hospital might be needed more than in another. Mennonites are not the only Christian people in the world. Other groups in a given area may also be concerned about the spiritual needs of those entrusted to institutional care. The need for old people's homes is not the same everywhere. True, there are old people everywhere, but the pattern of living may differ. Also, available opportunities vary.

The same principle holds for other categories. Wise expenditure of money and personnel, since both are limited, would suggest evaluation of strategic need. This same principle is used in MCC work. Since not all can be done, the aim is to fit into the picture in the most strategic way possible.

4. Maximum value to the recipient of the service. This priority principle is admittedly difficult to interpret. However, it seems to this writer that the principle is sound. For example, Brook Lane Farm does not concentrate on curable cases of mental illness because we do not have a Christian concern for the incurable, chronic cases. The reason is that the desire is for a maximum good for the investment. It appears clear that in this case a wide decision has been made to seek to help as many as possible. A reading of the reports from Brook Lane and Kings View indicates this to be a wise policy.



Perhaps this principle has not been followed in a co-ordinated manner in our decisions as to institutional expansion in the social welfare field. An interesting observation in this connection is the relatively little which is being done in child welfare. Possibly one explanation is that Mennonites do not face this problem as directly. This is attested by the fact that not more than 4.5 per cent of the children have Mennonite connection. And that connection is probably in the case of the death of one or both parents.

5. Where leadership can be given in this area of human need in larger spheres. Certainly we are not only concerned about the mental cases, the old and sick people, with which we have to do in our own institutions. Our concern reaches out to suffering humanity everywhere. It appears that in some areas the opportunities for leadership are greater than others. In a controlled situation theories and techniques can be tried and evaluated. Perhaps this is one of the greatest values of minority groups in relation to the larger witness.

It appears that we could be doing more sharing in these realms. Should we not develop leaders who can give guidance in larger areas? Perhaps our greatest single opportunity along this line is in the mental hospital field. This field is wide open. However, in general hospitals, too, the whole realm of counselling is open for investigation. Only three hospitals reported they had regular pastoral care. Leadership in the care of the aged is badly needed.

### Five Special Questions

The following are only five of the many questions which could be raised in addition to the foregoing. To be sure, they are related to that which has gone before, but we state them to give special focus to the issues involved.

1. Are we solving to a sufficient degree the basic problems for which our institutions were founded? I recall that in Pennsylvania our Home For The Aged was supported almost entirely by offerings from churches. This involved obvious problems. Many old people's homes are now operated on the principle of the balanced budget. In interviewing superintendents this was stressed. This is true in Canada and the U.S. One superintendent hired an accountant to give him precise figures as to the cost of operating the home in relation to the guest-day. One superintendent said, "We have no financial problems. We operate at a profit."

Of course, the theory in back of this trend is not as harsh as the practice might seem. In one case, it is the understanding that where possible the family pays. If this cannot be done, the local church is to pay. If this is not possible, the conference pays. But, there are many practical problems involved. Recently a man, who did not know I was making this study, said: "If things keep on



as they are, our old people's homes will be exclusive clubs where only the rich can afford to be." Evidently he could not afford to pay for the keep of his mother in the home, and the church or conference did not offer to help.

Have we given sufficient thought to the "Bear ye one another's burdens" aspect of our work? Have we met the problem sufficiently? Recently, I was in several homes where physical disaster struck. Especially in two cases, it wiped out the family resources without solving their problems. The question I raise is whether more thought should be given to working out in greater detail a workable system of mutual support.

2. Have we given sufficient thought to the Christian "plus" factor? Is it possible that we too often assume that because we are a church-sponsored institution that the Christian "plus" factor will automatically manifest itself? There appears to be an uneasiness on the part of some that sufficient thought has not been given to this area of our work.

The following are a few excerpts from replies:

"The love of Christ makes all the difference between merely *required service* and 'the plus.' The 'off the record' service cheerfully given. Money cannot pay for some of the work done here."

"Morning worship in chapel, prayer meeting, Sunday school and worship period. Practical Christian living by workers . . ."

"Spiritual atmosphere also the worth of the individual and the liberty of each person when he is considered as an individual rather than forced to fall in line in everything."

The foregoing, which is very fragmentary, does demonstrate that much is being done to create a spiritual atmosphere and give a Christian testimony in our institutions. Yet, I raise the question whether we should not give added heed to this factor of our institutional witness.

3. How can we make better use of the time of those entrusted to our care? This includes recreational activities as well as useful pursuits in work and service. This refers primarily to old people's homes. We are moving toward a fuller consideration of this problem. This trend is clear.

These responses indicate that while there is an awareness of the question, more needs to be done. Of course, it needs to be said that in society as a whole we are just coming to the point of an appreciable realization of the fallacy of older concepts. In one institution—not Mennonite—in response to my question "Well, how are you to-day?" a lady answered: "Mr. Shelly, we don't

expect to get better: we are just kept here to die." We have gone a long way from that attitude.

Related to this question is the one regarding what outside people can do for those in our institutions. The response here is a bit more sparse. Apparently not much is done apart from visits and religious services. It seems to me one important thing to remember is that those in our institutions appreciate being considered as individuals. In one case I presented a set of pictures on missions and our seminary work just as though I was in a church. I felt this was much appreciated. We need more detailed consideration of what those outside our institutions can do for those on the inside. And, indeed, it is not all a one way affair; for it can be considered as another form of corporate activity normal in the sense that other activities are normal. Instead of thinking of it as doing something "for" the guests, we think of doing something "with" them.

4. Can we make use of voluntary service and gifts-in-kind to a greater degree in our institutions? Twenty institutions use voluntary service. Thirty indicate they feel the use of voluntary service workers is feasible. Some frankly state that they do not feel the use of voluntary service workers is feasible. The usual reason for this is the need for specialized help.

It does appear that more use could be made of short term workers. It does seem that in at least some institutions, in certain services, young people would profit by serving for one or several years before settling down in life.

One is impressed by the degree to which this principle has been put to use at Rosthern, Saskatchewan. It appears in the program there, young people do give one or more years.

Perhaps we have not given sufficient thought to this aspect of our total service program. Of course, while we refer to young people, it would seem that older people might also wish to give time.

On the question of gifts-in-kind there was difference of opinion. In some cases very enthusiastic endorsement is given. For example, one superintendent of an old people's home writes: "We could not operate without gifts-in-kind. It is practical to us only locally. I believe this type of giving could be expanded to a much greater extent." On the other hand another superintendent said it is better to sell the produce and give the money. While there is difference of opinion, it does appear that at least in a limited sense, in some communities, gifts-in-kind giving could be increased to mutual usefulness.

5. Are there dangerous implications in the acceptance of public funds for the operation of our institutions? In many cases very

sizable amounts of public funds are used. This is the form of old age pensions, county grants for patients unable to pay, grants for buildings, etc. The survey seemed to indicate that there is little question raised as to the wisdom of accepting the assistance.

This observation goes beyond the study at hand. However, here is another indication of the inevitability of our relationship with larger aspects of society, including government. I am not in a position to evaluate this observation. I merely point it out as one of the surprises I had in making this study. I did not realize that our institutions were receiving as much aid from what might be termed public funds.

This study must now be brought to a close. It has been a very rewarding research project for the writer. I close with three statements:

First, it is my hope and prayer that more well-trained young people will enter the types of work indicated in this study. I quote from a paragraph in one of the responses:

"I hope that in the not too distant future an enterprising young Mennonite will run an old people's home with occupational therapy, with adjunctive medical facilities, with a social worker, and with a decentralized housing system. On this subject I would like to refer you to P. V. Lemkau's article in which he contends the following: 'There is apparently no direct relationship between anatomical changes in the brain and the behavior of the personality. The capacity to function is lost when not exercised. It, therefore, is well for human beings to maintain a wide range of interest throughout life.'"

Second, the trend of cooperation among Mennonite groups in institutional work is desirable. I quote from the report of a hospital administrator:

"We have learned that the various Mennonite groups can work together very well in CPS, MCC and Mental health. It is my conviction that Mennonite hospitals and homes should work closer together, sharing personnel and feeling the responsibility of each other's welfare. In many cases we have found that our various Mennonite groups have been the poorest supporters of an institution in the community because it was of a different group of Mennonites. This may be somewhat of a local situation but it seems to be pretty much a general problem to get good support from our various Mennonite groups."

I agree with this fine administrator, but I think the degree of present cooperation far exceeds the knowledge of this gentleman. In many communities various groups cooperate well.

Further, I wonder whether the time has not come to work together on higher levels. The present organization of Mennonite college administrators could probably be expanded in scope of operation. It might even be possible to cooperatively hire a qualified individual to give general suggestive direction to this area of



Christian witness. Further, someone might sponsor a workers paper—perhaps to be issued quarterly, giving suggestions in certain aspects of our institutional life. What we can better do together we ought not to do separately. Perhaps the MCC pattern can be expanded in new areas.

Third, I want to state my strong appreciation for this area of the work of our churches. I want to pay sincere tribute to the wonderful workers I have met in this arm of the work of the church. Many times their service is unsung and unnoticed by the crowd. By innumerable daily sacrifices they are serving Christ in sincerity.

May our Lord richly bless our service for Him in all these areas—given “in the name of Christ.” May He grant us vision and wisdom to do His will.

NAME	ADDRESS	Regular Publication	Date Organized	Capacity	Av. Occupancy 3-30-4-15, '53	Mennonites	No. Workers
<b>Old People's Homes</b>							
Menn. Nursing Home, Albany, Ore.		no	1947	27	27	33%	10
Sunshine Mission Home, Buhler, Ks.		no	1945	12	11	100%	3
Menn. Home for Aged, Eureka, Ill.		yes	1922	40	40	62	7
M. Home for Aged, Frederick, Pa.		no	1896	35	32	65	10
Salem Menn. Home for Aged, Freeman, S. D.		no	1949	14	12	50	5
Rest Haven, Grossville, Ark.		no	1950	20	17	none	5
Menn. Bethesda Hosp. & Home Soc., Goessel, Kan.		yes	1898	27	27	100	11
Sunset Home for Aged, Geneva, Neb.		no	1950	11	10	30	4
Mission Home, Hillsboro, Kan.*		no	1942	18	17	94	8
Salem Home, Hillsboro, Kan.*		no	1889	14	14	75	4
Home for the Aged, Inman, Kan.		no	1948	18	17	95	5
Mennonite Home, Lancaster, Pa.		no	1905	138	134	67	26
The Tieszen Home Inc., Marion, S.D.		no	1947	40	34	50	5
Maugansville, Md., O. P. Home		no	1922	35	26	50	5
The Mennonite Home, Meadows, Ill.		no		36	34	none	20
Bethel Home Inc., Montezuma, Kan.		no	1952	34	17	99	7
Tabor Home for Aged, Morden, Man.		no	1921	55	54	66	21
Home for the Aged, Mt. Lake, Minn.		no	1898	35	33	25	8
Samaritan Home, New Holland, Pa.		yes	1926	72	60	53	27
Bethel Home for Aged, Newton, Ks.		no	1943	26	25	68	8
Braeside Home, Preston, Ont.		no	1942	48	48		16
Menn. Home for Aged, Reedley, Cal.		no	1901	41	39	75	8
Menn. O. P. Home, Rittman, Ohio		no	1944	16	10	90	2
Rosenort Home for Aged, Rosthern		no	1916	80	78	73	22
Eastern Menn. Home, Souderton, Pa.		no	1946	47	47	60	23
Home for Aged & Infirm, “Bethania”, Winnipeg, Man.		no	1944	28	28	89	8
Mission Home, Yarrow, B.C.							
Totals .....				953	877	63%	274
* Community							



NAME	ADDRESS	Regular Publication	Date Organized	Av. Occupancy 3-30-4-15, '53	Capacity	Mennonites	No. Workers
<b>General Hospitals</b>							
Bethania Hospital, Altona, Man.		no	1911	36	31	4.4	40
Menn. Deaconess H. & H. Inc., Beatrice, Neb.		no	1919	109	99.6	6	160
Menn. Hosp., Bloomington, Ill.		no	1952	16	5	40	10
Freeman Com. Hosp., Freeman, S.D.		yes	1910	26			18
Menn. Bethesda Hosp., Goessel, Ks.		no	1950	31	13		25
Kiowa County Memorial Hosp., Greensburg, Kan.		no	1942	37	34	33	11
Henderson Community Hosp., Inc., Henderson, Neb.		no	1950	13	9		10
Lebanon Com. Hosp., Lebanon, Ore.		no	1948	67	43	1.4	17
Salem Hospital Inc., Hillsboro, Ks.*		no	1918	25	14	50	25
M. Hosp. Sanitarium, LaJunta, Colo.		yes	1907	123		5	120
Mercy Hospital, Moundridge, Kan.		yes	1944	12		75	10
Bethel Hospital, Mt. Lake, Minn.		no	1919	32	17	75	19
Bethel Deaconess Home and Hosp., Newton, Kan.		yes	1908	100	76	25	125
Bethesda Hosp. Soc., Steinbach, Man		no	1936	30	26		30
Bethel Hospital, Winkler, Man.							
Totals .....				693	367	23%	630
* Community							
<b>Mental Hospitals</b>							
Brook Lane Farm, Hagerstown, Md.		yes	1949	29	29	25	24
Prairie View Hosp., Newton, Kan.		no	not open	40			
Philhaven Hosp., Lebanon, Pa.		no	1952	35	23	25	19
Kings View Home, Reedley, Cal.		yes	1951	30	30	50	27
Bethesda Home for Mentally Ill, Vineland, Ont.		no	1937	53	56	75	24
Totals .....				187	138	51%	94
<b>Children's Homes</b>							
Salem Child's Home, Flanagan, Ill.		no	1898	90	74	none	18
Grace Children's Home, Henderson, Neb.		yes	1936	36	30	10	12
Menn. Children's Home, Kansas City, Kan.		yes	1919	50	38	none	12
Children's Home, Rosthern, Sask.		no	1947	10	4	2.5	
Menn. Orphan's Home, West Liberty, Ohio		no	1898	40	35	2	10
Mennonite Youth Village, White Pigion, Mich.		no	1950	32		10	12
Totals .....				255	177	4.5%	64

NAME	ADDRESS	Regular Publication	Date Organized	Capacity	Av. Occupancy 3-30-4-15, '53	Mennonites	No. Workers
<b>Girls Homes</b>							
Elim Girls Home, Calgary, Alberta		no		12	9	90	
Menn. Girls Home, Saskatoon, Sask.		no	1931			100	
Mary, Martha Home for Girls, Vancouver, B. C.		no	1935	16	12	33	
Ebenezer Girls Home, Winnipeg			1926				
Mary-Martha Home, Winnipeg, Man.		no	1925	18	14	90	3
Totals .....						78%	
<b>Invalid Homes</b>							
Bethania Invalid Home, Winnipeg			1946		33		
Invalid Home, Rosthern, Sask.		no	1949	53	56	75	

# SOCIAL WORK AS A CHRISTIAN PROFESSION

*Carl F. Smucker*

## I

### **Social Work: What Is It?**

Social work is a professional service whose principles and objectives arise from and are closely identified with the basic objectives of the church. The profession is a child of the church. Many of the pioneers and subsequent leaders grew up in devoted Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish families, including such persons as A. J. McKelway, Graham Taylor, Hastings H. Hart, Monsignor Robert Keegan, Solomon Lowenstein who had been a Rabbi, Jane Addams, and Grace and Edith Abbott.

Social work is likewise closely linked to the basic aims of a democratic society. Such aims as

1. Firm faith in the dignity, worth and creative power of the individual.

2. Complete belief in his right to hold and express his own opinions and to act upon them, so long as by so doing he does not infringe upon the rights of others.

3. Unswerving conviction of the inherent, inalienable right of each human being to choose and achieve his own destiny in the framework of a progressive, yet stable, society.<sup>1</sup>

The profession of social work seeks to create and give specialized services which aid individuals and groups to achieve these goals. It sees value in individual differences. It sees social unity and progress as resulting from fusion of these differences rather than from their suppression.

Professional social work is built on a democratic spiritual base; on an integrated body of knowledge distilled from physical, medical, psychological and social science; and on technical methods derived from both this scientific knowledge and the tested experience of skilled practitioners. Social work practice like that of other professions is a public trust. Every goal of this helping profession is stated in the Old or New Testament. The social services deal with man as of supreme worth because he is man. The church says man is of utmost worth because he is a child of God.

What then do we believe? We are un-ashamedly "do gooders." We are helpful to people in their time of need. We stand up and are counted among those who are trying to lighten the burden of people who are unable to take care of themselves, among those who try to prevent misery in all its ugly aspects. We are trying to help children grow up into healthy, wholesome personalities

by meeting their needs in child guidance centers, children's homes, boarding homes or by means of public assistance when needed for the child in his own home.

Whether man is hungry, sick in mind or body, anxious or in trouble we have a strong urge to help him. We believe in the intrinsic worth of the individual and while our interest is in behalf of society we believe our focus is on the individual, a person supreme and divine.

Those who are unable to care for themselves are our reason to be. We, therefore, work with the lost, last and least. We believe that every individual is worth helping, not just the "cream of the crop," but those gone sour, those who are least desirable, those who are rejected of men and despised.

We believe that the individual has real value in any location in the world. We are interested not only in our babies, but in those all over the world that are hungry and ill clad. We want to help anyone in the uttermost parts of the world not only to learn better processes in the helping methods, but to give them an opportunity to learn that democracy recognizes the true worth and dignity of the individual.

There is another term we do not run away from. That term is the "welfare state." The high spending today is for warfare—not welfare. Efforts made to make us believe otherwise are unfair and erroneous. In a talk at Princeton University in 1950, Governor Thomas E. Dewey made this statement:

It must have been some very clumsy Republican—I do not know the origin of the phrase or who perpetrated it—who tried to pin the label "welfare state" on Mr. Truman's government. Others joined in the clamor and, of course, the apologists for big government joyously accepted the epithet as a new instrument of party warfare. They admit they are running a welfare state. They are proud of it! Of course, they are running a welfare state. I am proud of the fact that we in the State of New York have made great social welfare advances, as have most of the states. Anybody who thinks that an attack on the fundamental ideal of security and welfare is appealing to people generally, is living in the middle ages.

We work with and for the unsuccessful people, the underdog, the failure, the maladjusted, the unemployed and the ill. We try to understand what he is up against. We don't condemn these people like some do, but we try to help each individual to make the most of his potentialities so that he can move toward self direction and self-support. We believe that assistance to people either as a casework service or a cash grant can be a constructive experience. We believe if given wrongly it can create dependency but under no circumstances do we meet financial need or other needs on the basis of an assumption of authority over the person who



happened to be the recipient. But for the grace of God many of us could be recipients. We speak with pride (perhaps unjustified) that we Mennonite are "not among the poor." There are some recipients and perhaps more than we think. But somehow God gave us much in native endowment and physical resources so that we have been placed largely on the giving end and not the receiving end. What place does God have for us in social work?

We recognize that the chief aim of social work is to help people in need of such service to develop strengths from within. The principal objective of child welfare is to advance the opportunities afforded to children and youth to develop strength or health in the whole personality. This aim social work shares with agencies directed toward the promotion of health, educational opportunity and religious expression. That strength is spiritual which alone can give direction, endurance and satisfaction to human beings. It must be shared. It cannot be given away or hoarded. Therefore, man is called upon to share the strength of God. This is an act of faith. It is a partnership with Him in the work of the world. We can experience His power and we know it will transform the weak, heal the sick, comfort the fearful and give unto man strength to go on. The greatest spiritual resource a social worker can have is faith that fathers, mothers and children whom we serve owe their existence to God and that His goodness and care extends to the least of His creatures.

The men and women and children whom the social worker sees in the home and school, hospital and clinic, court and prison, Y.M.C.A., or public relief agency have within themselves or have had through God's plan the possibility of apprehending something of the love of Christ. They and we are weak, but so was Peter weak, yet he was called by Christ to become the rock and responded to that call. They and we are often small and petty, but so were James and John when they allowed their mother to intervene with the petition that they be accorded a place on the right hand of Christ in the earthly kingdom they thought he was going to establish. They and we may have betrayed friends or relatives, as Judas betrayed Him who called the false disciple "Friend." Yet men and women can never fail so utterly as to be beyond the reach of God's mercy. Just as you and I cannot build up our own powers to be beyond the measure of His judgment. No matter how blind or how sinful, they are always to be thought of as having dignity and worth because they were created as children of God free to pursue evil or good and never beyond the redemptive power of His love and goods. We need not despair. His care and compassion are for the victims of evil and His judgment and forgiveness are for its perpetrators.

In social work the frame of reference is the dignity, worth and freedom of the individual. His freedom is to be limited

only if it jeopardizes the freedom and rights of others. Social work is concerned with the individual, not to assure maximum usefulness to the State, but to develop his full capacities and powers in a measure consonant with his status as a free and responsible human being. The social worker is to approach him whom he serves in the spirit of fellowship, of sharing and to seek to establish with him a relationship based upon freedom of choice. Authority may be necessary, but only to be used through law such as in cases of nonsupport.

Social workers have always borne witness to the limitations on freedom imposed by disease, poverty, unemployment, economic exploitation, racial prejudice and discrimination. They have sought social remedies that would enlarge the areas of personal freedom and release physical, intellectual and spiritual powers.

Of necessity social work has looked to government. What church could meet the staggering welfare bill in a single state—yes a single county? In Allen County, Ohio, my home county of approximately 70,000 people the Aid to Dependent Children, Aid to Blind, General Relief and Aid to Permanently and Totally Disabled programs cost \$22,326.67 in September of 1952, while the Aid for Aged category for the same month cost \$68,696.57 for 1280 cases. The total amount spent for those categories in the State of Ohio that month was \$3,085,295.21. Are we doing all we can? Or are we finally becoming convinced that government help is an expression of the fact that democracy does care and that freedom from fear and want is thus attained through a minimum of social security by means of these income maintenance programs?

The church today agrees that it has no program to meet this type of human need. My own conviction after twenty years of experience is that many persons in professional social work consider themselves to be an "arm of the church." Those persons are active church workers, leaders in their community serving as case-workers, directors of agencies and superintendents of children's homes. They are working in a "secular" setting, but consider their work to be a sacred trust based on their deepest religious convictions.

Yet the church originated these programs many years ago. Its function today is to start new programs, experiment in human undertakings and change or adapt to new needs. Thus for some Mennonites, it would be possible to find deep satisfaction, as do public schoolteachers to be counted as loyal Christians working for the total good at the point of greatest need. They can witness for Christ in His world through the profession of social work. God has called us to give, to share and to serve. It is unmistakably clear. Our compassion is directed toward fusion of the giver and receiver. We must seek quality not bigness.

## II

**The Biblical Basis for the Social Services**

It is with a divine realization that both social work and religion recognize the responsibility to meet common human needs. Social work does not always use the available resources in spiritual forces nor does organized religion understand social work objectives and methods. If these two great forces move even more closely together mankind may yet reach new heights in its destiny.

The biblical basis for social service is to be found in both the Old and New Testament. In Deuteronomy 15:8 we read:

"If you have a poor man, one of your fellow-countrymen, in any township of the land which the Eternal your God gives you, you must not harden your heart nor shut your hand against your poor brother; you must open your hand to him, lending him enough to meet his needs."

Then in Proverbs we find such admonitions as:

"He that despiseth his neighbor sinneth; but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he."

"The righteous considereth the cause of the poor; but the wicked regardeth not to know it."

"Let not mercy and truth forsake thee."

In Matthew 25, verses 35, 36 and 40 we read:

"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

"Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

In I Corinthians 13:3, we read:

"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

The verse from Corinthians does not mean just alms, but wise and understanding deeds. The New Testament is full of examples of His kindness, His healing of the sick, and how He gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf. He gave advice and counsel to the erring—always with sympathy and love.

Jesus replied on one occasion, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor." We are thus bound to his bidding. This is His work. We are doing His will by divine injunction. The age old virtue of giving and helping people has been extended into professional practice to meet the needs of people today.

These are our high objectives and motivations for service as social workers. We have no monopoly on these high purposes. Likewise no other profession does either. In medicine good health



is the goal, but Christ can heal and does many times when medicine alone cannot.

Education can never be restricted to teachers alone. Social work educates, the church educates, and so does the home.

Social security, family life and decent provision of social opportunities which are thought of as the ideas of social service cannot be divorced from things of the spirit—from the church and from dynamic religion.

Therefore, social needs overlap. There are many common objectives common tools to reach a truly abundant life. The historical expression of social service has developed far beyond the days of Sparta and Greece when deformed and crippled children were exposed to the wolves or thrown upon the cold hillsides. In India baby girls were once disposed of because people were too poor to feed another mouth. In Europe and Medieval times the church and nuns in Catholic convents were the first to show unselfish concern for unwanted babies. They saved them and made of them adherents of the faith.

In 1729 the first orphanage in America was the Ursuline Convent in New Orleans. We cannot deny the biblical basis of this concern for children. I am sure, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," speaks to Catholics as well as Protestants.

### III

#### **Social Work Not Under Church Auspices**

Social Work is administered under public auspices through tax funds or under voluntary and private auspices supported by voluntary contributions and usually controlled by a board of citizens.

Since the Social Security Act of 1935, and more recently in mental health activities, a very substantial proportion of money spent and individuals served are related to tax supported agencies.

"In increasing measure social work is finding its services useful not only in voluntary and governmental social agencies but in business, labor unions, religious and church work, the courts and medicine. The wide scope in social work suggests that society is beginning to recognize the peculiar—perhaps unique—contribution of the social work disciplines and is therefore calling on this field for many and varied tasks. The clue seems to be that wherever society impinges on the individual or behavior is a determinant of steps to be taken by way of public policy, social work at its best has a potentially valuable contribution to make. This is possible because social work is a synthesis of knowledge from many disciplines. Its virtue is its integration of those borrowings into a workable tool focused on the good of the individual, of



society, or of both in terms of many individuals and their needs and their behavior in response thereto."<sup>2</sup>

Social casework is practiced in: both governmental and voluntary and family and children's agencies; social service departments of hospitals and clinics; mental hospitals; social work departments of schools; probation departments of courts; such national voluntary agencies as the American National Red Cross and National Travelers Aid Association; and such public agencies as the Army, the Veterans Administration, and the widespread public assistance programs throughout the country.

Social group work is usually carried on in settlements, community centers, YMCA's, and YWCA's, boys' and girls' clubs, sectarian centers, and public recreation departments.

Community organization for social welfare is performed primarily under the following auspices: councils of social agencies and social planning councils; state conferences of social work; community chest activities; local, state and national public welfare units; various public health agencies; and all social agencies to some extent through planning and program promotion.

At present the established norm for professional training consists of two years of graduate professional training in an accredited school of social work. There are 53 such graduate schools in America. It is estimated that over 100,000 persons are employed in the social work field.

Social work is a young and dynamic profession and is far from reaching its optimum maturity. The public has increasingly come to accept social work, but any profession charged with the responsibility of spending so much money is a target for those who wish to undermine its basic objectives.

The total welfare bill in this nation is around two and one-half billions of dollars a year while in comparison to the defense effort which is set up at ten billions of dollars per month.

The Aid to Dependent Children program is serving 600,000 families with more than a million children receiving a monthly benefit. The main purpose of this program is to make it possible for a needy child to remain in his own home with his own family or close relatives who have a natural bond of affection and concern for his well-being. The child and mother receive economic support and services they need for health and development. The children receive an education that will help them develop their capacities and share in the life of the neighborhood and community. Thus when a family circle is broken or incomplete or parents are handicapped by physical or mental disability they are helped by a financial grant and are given a feeling of security through care, guidance and affection from their blood relatives who really love them.

I personally know of hundreds of families that are being kept together by this program. They were sustained in a time of crisis and by being on this program were able to attend the church of their choice. They were able to play a part in their effort to build the Kingdom of God. These families would otherwise have been broken up and the children sent to a children's home.

Should these families be told by the richest nation in the world: you cannot eat. You must not go to school. It matters not if you are too ashamed of your clothes to go to church. You do not need recreation. Go to work, children and mothers or you will be considered lazy. ADC helps the unmarried mother who already is carrying a heavy burden. Are we willing to help understand her problems or do we wish to condemn and punish?

I know personally many of the ADC families who with the meager support that we give them have managed extremely well and have been able to keep the home together. The mothers have remained in the home to cook and mend for their families and it has created an atmosphere where they could develop their God given capacities. Many of these children are to be found at the head of their classes, honored as valedictorians of their school, participating in church work, playing in school orchestras, in 4-H work, attending college and nursing school and then going out to earn and help their younger brothers and sisters.

Is it not a credit to our democracy that ADC cares for the one-half million families broken each year by death or other causes? Many fine families would disintegrate or undergo suffering that would leave emotional scars that could never be erased.

Jimmy, whose father is blind and whose mother is also physically incapacitated was about to quit school when ADC stepped in. He went on through high school, finished as an honor student and earned a four year scholarship to Columbia University. He was preparing for a career which would take his parents off of the relief rolls. Is there anything wrong with this kind of an investment in children? Human need does exist. Some parents are wilfully neglectful and these children then become the responsibility of the community to help them from decaying morally and spiritually and to meet the everyday need of food and clothing. Social work steps in at a point of crisis and lends a helping hand.

I have never yet seen a church weakened by serving these public assistance families. Quite the contrary the church has given them a place where all are equal in the sight of God. A place where spiritual help is to be found. A body of believers who show concern and give comfort in many ways thus serving their rightful function as church members. The social agency makes the social and economic burden lighter, but only the church can feed the hungry soul.

This year in a high school near Bluffton the top honors went to a young girl from an ADC family. She has had a great struggle but with the help from ADC was able to graduate and is planning to go to college. What other agency could provide a cash grant of over \$150.00 per month for a period of many years? The father died, leaving a young mother with eight children. The case worker, a fine Christian person helped this family survive with encouragement and personal interest. A local woman's club is going to sponsor the girl through college. They have already provided clothing which could not be purchased out of the grant. The ADC program can give no assistance to children over 18.

Consider too, the many families who are boarding children. The case worker reports that often good Christian people are unwilling to take someone else's child into their home for board and care. Would we be willing to give a child from a broken home a room in our home? The child who is unwanted, rejected needs the emotional climate of our homes. Will we respond to this child in need of love or would we rather give money to a cause far away? Would it make us feel better? I have heard it said by prominent missionary leader that we like missionary outposts—if they are out far enough. There is not a person here who could not make a vital Christian contribution to these lost and forgotten children, if we took them into our own homes. Taking children into your own home is a great challenge and I believe one of the least of these is worth more than the whole world.

## V

### The Challenge Ahead

It is not often realized that when people have problems which overwhelm them, that frequently their problems are the cause of the disruption of the individual's faith. As church people we need to be sensitive to human needs and extend Christ's ministry whenever such needs exist.

The social worker has often been called "The engineer of human destiny." He is an expert in human relations. He is an artist who finds his laboratory wherever people are. It requires great skill to take a child from his own home and place it successfully in a boarding home. This cuts into human personality in a very unique way. We admire the surgeon who takes the knife in his hand to cut out the diseased portion of human flesh. Do we realize that it also takes great skill to tell a mother or father what their basic problem is and to point out the plan of treatment? In doing this work we are cutting into human personality which may have an even greater effect on the child's life than the operation performed by the surgeon.

In an article in the MCC Service Bulletin, Jake Goering points



out that "During mental illness where there is usually a disorder of either mood or the thought, the patient's religious thinking is distorted along with other areas of personality. There is a feeling that God has rejected them and there is a deep sense of separation both from God and man. This often follows with a deep feeling of guilt. The patient needs to experience the healing balm of Christian love and faith. If the worker really likes people and is a person of faith he can transmit this to the patient. He will be able to borrow faith and confidence from the person or agency which so well cares for him."<sup>3</sup>

So it is with all the social services. As Christians we can give an added measure of love—a distinctive approach. We can see a child lose his fear; to begin to love again and gain confidence in people. Yes, this is our task! To bring new life to the child so that he can respond to the Christian message. A bitter frustrated child will seldom respond to the Christian message. Do we really understand this and believe it to be true? There must be some major conflicts resolved. Then as Christian workers we can seek in a gradual process of change, the unfolding of a personality of real Christian potential.

Marjory A. Poole in her pamphlet, *Social Case Work as a Christian Career*, says, "The young worker will note that religious motives and feelings lie deep in almost every individual and he will note that the deeper they lie the more difficult it is at times to discover their real meaning. He will realize that he cannot use any motivation with a patient until he has reasonable understanding of what that motivation means to the person."<sup>4</sup>

The case worker with a Christian motivation will find undreamed of relationship between the principles of mental hygiene, personality growth, psychological drives and the teachings of Jesus.

"Association with a Christian agency or institution makes the interpretation of Christian teaching more natural many times, provided such interpretation is allowed the freedom demanded by the requirements of science. Frontiers of study will beckon to the student of human behavior; if he will dedicate himself to that study in relation to religion he may make a contribution as significant as that of Freud or Jung, but that will take all his life and his dedication. The student who is prepared to enter the work with such intensity can make a high quality of contribution in the day-by-day consecrated loyalty to the ideals of the calling. He will lose himself for others, only to find himself. He will discover ever anew the meaning of 'The kingdom of heaven is within you.' In order to help and to heal he must have a portion of such a kingdom; or he cannot interpret to others the meaning of life."<sup>5</sup>

As Christians we should be motivated by the fact that the higher our motive the greater the inclination that its expression must be



good. Good impulse is not enough. We must understand the complex problems to be solved. We must know what the needs really are in the various rural and urban settings.

As Mennonites we need to take social work skills into many new phases of our work. The city churches need social work help. The city areas located in the slums and deteriorating neighborhoods are sources of crime and delinquency. Millions live in these unchurched areas. These neighborhoods offer the greatest missionary challenge in America today. How can we succeed here as missionary social workers? How can we reclaim these lost areas? We need to know these communities like we know people. We need skills in group work, skills in organizing clubs for boys and girls and skills in adult education that will win these people back to the church. With this rebirth of things of the spirit, with knowledge derived from God, power that comes from action in the furtherance of His Kingdom we can light these communities with a new purpose.

We, likewise need more social work skills in the mental hygiene programs of the MCC. This is urgent to a knowledge of social and personal factors in the understanding of the total background of the patient. There is a tremendous need of interpreting mental health to communities. Skills in interviewing and counselling are urgently needed in our college programs.

Social work skills are essential to a successful ministry in many positions in both home and foreign missions; in schools, hospitals, churches, neighborhood houses and in various types of community work.

The schools need help in understanding social and personal adjustment problems, help in pre-marital counselling, understanding programs for the exceptional child, including both the retarded and brilliant child. Help is needed in working with the parents in the home, who have problems with the school child, such as failure in school without obvious cause, shyness, aggressiveness and neglect.

The medical social worker is the liason person between hospital and home. The social worker helps both individual and family carry out the recommendations of the physician, psychiatrist and psychologist. Patients are helped to meet tremendous economic and social problems by the Christian medical social workers.

There is so much which needs to be done in family rehabilitation and prevention of social breakdown of families. We could do much to help such families through a planned program of case work services on a preventative basis. We have a great potential and reservoir of boarding homes in our Mennonite communities. If we know which children really need such care then we can provide supervision and follow up visits to the home on a regular

basis. I have found we do acceptable work with young children in an institution, but actually young children should most generally be placed in foster homes. Some children who are older such as teenagers, others with special problems which are difficult to handle in a foster home get along much better in an institution.

We might ask why there should be church social agencies. First, it gives church people an opportunity to work at special problems within the larger fellowship of the church. Second, the church must continue to pioneer in new ways and methods to meet human needs. For example problems peculiar to old age now are upon us. Third, and most important of the social services are the most tangible way in which the church can express the social and spiritual concern which inevitably accompanies the love and worship of God. It does enrich the life of the church and is a definite extension of Christ's Kingdom.

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<sup>1</sup> *Standards for the Professional Practice of Social Work*, American Association of Social Workers, New York, 1951.

<sup>2</sup> *Social Work Year Book*, 1951, New York, American Assn. of Social Workers, p. 492.

<sup>3</sup> *Service Bulletin*, MCC, Akron, Pa., Vol. 7, No. 1, March, 1953.

<sup>4</sup> Poole, Marjory A., *Social Casework as a Christian Career*, Board of Hospitals and Homes of the Methodist Church, 740 Rush St., Chicago 11, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Op. Cit., p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> For further study reference is made to *How One City Church Serves a Changed Neighborhood*, John W. Rustin, Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, May, 1949.

# AN ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL DISTANCE REACTIONS OF STUDENTS FROM THE THREE MAJOR AMERICAN MENNONITE GROUPS

*L. Roy Just*

## **The Problem**

The particular purpose of this study was to determine and compare the social distance reactions of Mennonite secondary school and college students toward thirty selected ethnic groups, thirty-four non-Mennonite religious groups, and twenty-six Mennonite groups. The problem derives from an inadequate knowledge of the social distance attitudes of Mennonite students.

## **The Concept of Social Distance**

The concept of social distance is a valuable tool in the study and interpretation of man's social relations. Social distance, as it was used in this study, is of the personal-group type and refers to the amount of sympathetic understanding that exists between a person and a group. It also refers to the entire continuum from social nearness to social farness. When a person possesses an attitude of great social nearness, he is tolerant and has a great deal of sympathetic understanding for a particular group or groups. When his attitude is one of great social farness, he is intolerant, prejudiced, and is characterized by a very small degree of sympathetic understanding of others.

## **The American Mennonites**

The Mennonites, or Anabaptists as they are frequently called, originated in Europe during the time of the Reformation. They formed the extreme left wing of the reform movement and as a result were persecuted by both Protestants and Catholics. By 1643, Mennonites migrated to America in search for freedom of religion. Others migrated to Prussia from the lowlands, from there to the Russian Ukraine, and then to the Americas. Many of the migrations were instigated by losses of self government and freedom from military service. To escape the "meddling world," the Mennonites have repeatedly migrated to new and undeveloped areas. Today, with few undeveloped areas to move to, the Mennonites are seeking an adjustment to "the world." This study was an attempt to determine and analyze the social distance attitudes of Mennonite young people who have grown up in cultural islands resulting from self-imposed segregation,



and who are undergoing the critical adjustment to "the world" from which they have been taught to remain "separate."

The three Mennonite branches in this study stress the education of their young people, and in order to control the content of the educational program, build and support educational systems of their own. Actually, this is a part of the practice of "separation," but it is also a positive attempt to retain and perpetuate cherished ideals and traditions. Essentially, the Mennonites are a simple, peace-loving group who believe they have a message for "the world," but find it rather difficult to "go into all the world" and yet remain "separated" from it.

### The Hypotheses

This study was designed to test seven hypotheses based on general information concerning the Mennonites. The hypotheses were: (1) Mennonite secondary school students show more social farness to the ninety selected groups than do college students, (2) There is no difference in the social distance responses of Mennonite male and female students, (3) Rural Mennonite students show greater social farness toward the ninety selected groups than do the urban, (4) Mennonite students choosing "social service" and "religious service" vocations show more social nearness toward the ninety selected groups than those choosing "individual service" vocations, (5) Mennonite students show most social farness to non-Mennonite religious groups, less to ethnic groups, and least to Mennonite groups, (6) To the extent that "separation from the world" is emphasized as a cardinal religious doctrine, it tends to create social farness, (7) Mennonite college students show more social farness toward the thirty selected ethnic groups than do average Americans.

### The Data

Three social distance scales were prepared for this study, using the Bogardus pattern. The first scale was designed to obtain social distance responses to thirty selected ethnic groups, the second obtained responses to thirty-four selected non-Mennonite religious groups, and the third obtained responses to twenty-six selected Mennonite groups. A complete set of instructions was prepared and sent to the heads of sixteen Mennonite secondary schools and colleges in America. The scales were administered to 1,713 Mennonite students during the school year 1949-50. From the completed scales it was possible to determine the average response made by each Mennonite school group to the individual ethnic, non-Mennonite religious, and Mennonite groups, and to the ethnic, non-Mennonite religious, and Mennonite scales as a whole. Thus it became possible to arrange groups in each scale

according to rank order of preference. This was done in table form as well as by comparing the average responses to determine the significance of the observed differences.

## FINDINGS

### The Hypotheses Tested

Findings concerning the hypotheses stated earlier are given in the light of the data available in this study.

1. Mennonite secondary school students show more social far-ness toward the ninety selected groups on the three social distance scales than Mennonite college students. The difference in response to all three scales is significant and not due to chance.

2. Mennonite male students reveal significantly more tolerant attitudes toward groups on all three scales than do female students. The data indicates that there may be definite factors operating in the Mennonite culture which cause females to possess less sympathetic understanding toward the ninety selected groups than males.

3. Mennonite rural and urban students are quite similar in their social distance reactions toward ethnic and Mennonite groups. Their responses toward the religious groups, however, show significant differences with the urban students indicating more tolerant attitudes. A large share of the social life of rural Mennonites takes place within the total church program and when social distance reactions are measured within this context, a relatively greater farness is displayed.

4. There is no significant difference between the social distance responses of "social service" and "religious service" students, but there is a significant difference between these two groups and the "individual service" students. It cannot be said that the type of vocation chosen by Mennonite students has greatly affected their social distance responses because very few have actually entered into their life's work. Rather, it may be that individuals with certain social attitudes tend to choose certain vocations as noted above.

5. There is a definite tendency on the part of Mennonite students to respond with tolerance when a group's ethnic name is used and relative intolerance when its religious name is used. For example, Mennonite students respond more favorably toward Indians of India than toward Hindus, and more favorably toward Chinese than toward Confucianists. From this it may be concluded that discriminatory judgments are keenest when responding toward non-Mennonite religious groups. There is a significant difference in Mennonite student responses toward the

groups on the three social distance scales. The greatest amount of social nearness is shown toward Mennonite groups. Ethnic groups are preferred next, and non-Mennonite religious groups last.

6. The Mennonite emphasis upon "separation" is not positively correlated with attitudes of social farness. The Old Mennonites stress the doctrines of nonconformity and "separation" more than do the General Conference Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren, but they reveal the greatest social nearness of the three Mennonite groups in this study. Perhaps the Old Mennonites have learned to balance the possible social farness effects of "separation" by a corresponding emphasis upon "social responsibility" and love for one's neighbor. On the other hand, it may be that the Mennonite emphasis upon "separation" is largely theoretical and therefore plays a small role in determining social attitudes.

7. In their responses to ethnic groups, Mennonite young people compare favorably with average non-Mennonites in the United States. Average responses of the two groups to the ethnic scale are virtually identical and therefore no significant difference appears. According to ethnic studies such as those by Eugene Hartley and others, there seems to be a uniformity of response to the ethnic scale in America which may be considered as a general culture pattern. Mennonite students respond according to this pattern, namely, the American whites, English, and Canadians are rated high in order of preference. Next come the north Europeans, then the south Europeans, and finally the Negroes and Asiatics. Mennonite young people, then, are no more intolerant than average American young people. This becomes meaningful when it is realized that other studies have shown minority groups to be somewhat less tolerant in their social distance responses than average Americans.

Other conclusions which may be drawn from this investigation are: (1) Old Mennonites possess the most social nearness of the three Mennonite groups in this study, the General Conference Mennonites rate second, and the Mennonite Brethren are last, (2) The concept of social distance proved an important tool in the analysis of Mennonite social attitudes, (3) Through the use of the Bogardus social distance scale, a number of different types of comparison were possible and many significant differences were discovered.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

What casual factors are operating to make the three Mennonite groups respond differently to the various groups on the three social distance scales? Research is necessary to determine the factors in Mennonite culture and current experience that promote social nearness and farness.

It would be advantageous to study the social distance attitudes

of the Mennonites by a test of actual behavior through the use of personal interviews and case histories. To what extent are Mennonites aware of ethnic, industrial, and religious conflicts? To what extent are they active in promoting programs and conferences which deal with inter-group relations? Such questions indicate the need for further research in this area.

A third suggestion for further research is a study to determine what the Mennonite schools and churches hold to be desirable social attitudes regarding ethnic and religious groups. To what extent do farness attitudes make the church's program effective in society?

Mennonite scholars need to re-define their use of the terms "liberal" and "conservative" as they apply to the various Mennonite branches. This study indicates that social attitudes are an important factor to be considered when the above terms are used. Further research is necessary to define these concepts in terms of specified particulars, including social distance attitudes.



## PROFILE OF A MENNONITE COMMUNITY— A SURVEY OF MOUNDRIDGE, KANSAS

*J. Lloyd Spaulding*

The presumption that the content of this paper will bear out the scope and objectives implied in the title is only partially warranted. Those research men present familiar with the literature in this field will be fully aware that our data are limited and the range of inquiry of our study extremely modest. Of far more importance than any data which this study may produce is the insight provided into a method whereby social investigation significant to Mennonites can be carried on with modest success on very meager budgets.

Should it be necessary, I will set down some assumptions basic to the organization of our course which produced our study and this paper.

"Community" is a very keystone of Mennonite culture. Mennonite culture has been preserved to a large extent in the context of the rural community.

Mennonite communities with their culture are open to all of the social forces which are generated in the social environment in which they are in daily contact.

Very little systematic information of the nature and trend in the incidence of these forces on the Mennonite community is available.

It is exceedingly doubtful, in my mind, that we can depend upon public agencies to perform the investigations essential to understanding the changing social attributes of our communities.

Mennonite colleges have numerous trained investigators in social science on their faculties, many of whom are tempted to follow the traditional pattern, and with the completion of the doctorate, produce no further literature in the field of their special training. Research is exceedingly difficult in a liberal arts college environment.

Young people in Mennonite colleges need the perceptions garnered from assistance in the planning and conduct of independent objective investigation in the field of the contemporary community inhabited by Mennonites. This community need not be rural.

With these objectives Dr. J. W. Fretz and I organized our classes in the "Contemporary Community," composed of juniors and seniors, and introduced them to the problems of conduct and planning a simple study designed to tell us some facts about a community close by in which numerous Mennonites lived, Moundridge, Kansas. We approached the leaders of the community and secured assent to our project.

The class sat in discussion over the objectives of the study, the organization of the schedule, the techniques of interviewing, and finally we launched upon the survey itself.

The class of 1949-50 conducted its survey in the town of Moundridge, while the class of 1950-51 supplemented this information with a smaller number of schedules from people living in the open country, almost all of whom farmed for a livelihood. Quite understandably, at many points these two groups of schedules cannot be analyzed together. In 1949-50 we obtained 249 schedules from town families, accounting for more than four-fifths of the families in the town. In 1950-51 we obtained 43 schedules from country families on a sampling basis.

Too little time was available for any single class to gain full insight into the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered. This discontinuity constitutes a serious limitation on the plan from the student viewpoint as we were then organized. Analysis and interpretation of necessity was shunted into the hands of the faculty collaborators. A major handicap in this research is the great difficulty of adding this great burden of analysis and interpretation to men handling full teaching loads.

These data do not purport to be the most significant obtainable nor the data which another group of investigators would seek after. But they represent an exploratory effort in effecting research and training students.

Moundridge has a population of slightly less than one thousand inhabitants. What do these people do for a living as they perform the services necessary to meet the needs of the community?

### Occupation

The major occupations in the town of Moundridge are divided among four groups of workers, each group containing about one person in five of the total population. With some judgment exercised in the matter of classification, these classes analyzed are as follows:

1. Skilled occupations
2. Semi-skilled and unskilled occupations
3. Business and managerial occupations
4. Retired persons

The other fifth of the population is found distributed in the categories of professional occupations, clerical occupations, and farmers. The function of the rural village as a place of retirement can be seen from these data.

### Denominational Status

Moundridge is known as a "Mennonite Community." But it is also a community of other Protestant churches. The heads of more than six families out of ten in both town and country belonged to a Mennonite church. About three out of ten heads of households belonged to a non-Mennonite denomination. The country families were in larger proportion Mennonite than the town families. Only 5 per cent of the Moundridge households in both town and country admitted no church affiliation. The strong influence of organized religion in Moundridge is probably characteristically rural.

Table I

#### Denominational Affiliation of Moundridge Families 1949 — 1951

Denomination	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
	Town		Country		Total	
Mennonite -----	149	59.8	33	76.7	182	62.3
Non-Mennonite ----	79	31.8	6	14.0	85	29.1
Mixed -----	6	2.4	1	2.3	7	2.4
No Affiliation -----	13	5.2	3	7.0	16	5.5
No information -----	2	.8	0		2	.7
Total -----	249	100.0	43	100.0	292	100.0

In very few instances do husband and wife maintain a church membership which is divided between a Mennonite and a non-Mennonite denomination. To the degree that persons have married across these denominational lines, the families have become members of one group or the other.

Among the Mennonite families interviewed, there were no instances where both Mennonite spouses had been reared in non-Mennonite homes. In about one Mennonite family in seven, either a husband or wife had been reared in a non-Mennonite home. In about 7 per cent of the non-Mennonite families, both spouses had been reared in Mennonite homes. In about one non-Mennonite family in six, a husband and wife had been reared in a Mennonite home.

Marriage plays a significant role in accounting for the transfer of individual membership from one denominational group to another. Many forces other than marriage cause some people to shift church affiliation from the denomination into which they were born. In Moundridge these forces seem to work entirely in the direction of taking some persons out of the Mennonite group into other denominations. Twenty-five per cent of the non-Mennonite families had had one or both of the spouses reared in a Mennonite home. The reasons for this behavior deserve careful study, and in

this survey we did not obtain much information useful in explaining it. The data refer only to persons living in the Mennonite community at the time of the survey and do not describe the experience of all persons born and reared to maturity in the Moundridge community.

### Income and Denominational Status

Moundridge has a modest variation in range of family incomes. It also has a high proportion of church membership. Clearly then, the amount of a man's income is not determinant of his role as a church member. But are the wealthier members of the town community predominantly Mennonite as one sometimes hears suggested? The data suggests that about the same relative distribution of income exists among Mennonite families as among non-Mennonite families.

**Table II**  
**Distribution of Family Income Among**  
**Mennonite and Non-Mennonite Town Families**  
**1950 — 1951**

Income Distribution	All town families		Mennonite		Non-Menn.	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Under 1,000 ----	36	14.5	22	14.8	10	12.7
1,000-2,000 -----	54	21.7	35	23.5	16	20.3
2,000-3,000 -----	65	26.1	43	28.9	16	20.3
3,000-5,000 -----	39	15.7	22	14.8	16	20.3
5,000-7,500 -----	8	3.2	3	2.0	4	5.0
7,500-10,000 -----	5	2.0	2	1.3	2	2.5
10,000 and over -	3	1.2	1	.7	2	2.5
No information -	39	15.6	21	14.0	13	16.4
Total -----	249	100.0	149	100.0	79	100.0

If the data are reliable, to the extent that differences between the two groups appear, there was probably a slightly higher proportion of Mennonite families receiving an income under two thousand dollars a year than did non-Mennonites. At the same time, probably a slightly lower proportion of Mennonite families received an income of five thousand dollars per year and over than did non-Mennonite families. Schedules yielding no information on income were found in about equal proportions in both groups.

These relationships may mean little more than a pointing up of the fact that Moundridge is a retirement spot for Mennonite families at a time when incomes are relatively low. On the other hand, a higher proportion of business persons and others at their peak of productivity may be more than proportionately non-Mennonite. Among the country families, too few schedules from non-Mennonites were received for adequate comparison.



### Religious Life

Almost everybody in Moundridge, in both town and country, professes church membership. But membership is not a complete index of church participation. The people who participated in the survey were asked to tell us how often the husband, (or family head), wife, and children attended church and Sunday school. Five choices were given them. Does the husband attend church (1) every Sunday, (2) twice a month, (3) once a month, (4) several times a year, (5) never. Analysis of the replies of Mennonite and non-Mennonite families revealed the following facts:

Almost three-quarters of the Mennonite husbands or heads of families were recorded as attending church every Sunday. While this may not be interpreted as literal fact in all cases, it indicates a behavior pattern in which church attendance is very great.

Among the Mennonite families, if church attendance every Sunday was not indicated, the next largest group, 12 per cent, indicated church attendance of the husband or family head twice a month. These two categories included over 85 per cent of all Mennonite families in the survey. Eight per cent of these Mennonite families, however, indicated church attendance of the husband or family head only several times a year, but only 2 per cent indicated that the husband never went to church. There were 182 Mennonite families in this sample.

In contrast, only 46 per cent of the non-Mennonite families indicated church attendance of the husband or family head every Sunday. And, in further contrast, among the non-Mennonites the next largest group reporting on church attendance was the 18 per cent indicating that the husband or head of the family never went to church. Fifteen per cent of the non-Mennonite families reported church attendance several times a year by the husband or family head. There were eighty-five non-Mennonite families in this analysis.

Interpretation of these facts is difficult or impossible without further study. But the non-Mennonite people may assume that religion, as measured by church attendance, is chiefly for women folk and children. Unfortunately, we have not been able to make a comparable analysis of the attendance of the wives in these families or find out why 8 per cent of the Mennonite husbands or family heads have lapsed in their church attendance to several times a year.

As measured by the behavior of the husbands and heads of families, Sunday school does not claim the degree of participation, among Mennonites and non-Mennonites alike, that the morning worship service does. Nevertheless, 68 per cent of all Mennonite husbands or heads of families reported Sunday school attendance every Sunday.

The next largest size group reporting among Mennonite families included 13 per cent of the husbands or heads of families who stated they never went to Sunday school. Nine per cent reported attendance several times a year. Among non-Mennonite families, one-third of the husbands or heads of families report Sunday school attendance every Sunday. However the largest group of husbands or family heads, some 42 per cent, report that they never attend Sunday school. Twelve per cent indicate attendance several times a year.

Probably we have a fairly accurate insight into the habits of church and Sunday school attendance on the part of most of the Moundridge Community. Whatever forces are at work to produce this difference in behavior between the Mennonite and non-Mennonite groups, the quarter of the non-Mennonite families with direct Mennonite antecedents must be remembered. It would be possible to analyze the non-Mennonites of Mennonite background on the matter of church attendance for comparison with other non-Mennonites.

### Income

To obtain information on the level of family income in the community, interviewers asked their respondent to indicate the class interval in which the family income fell. We were able to analyze family incomes in the town of Moundridge in 1949. In this year 26 per cent of Moundridge families enjoyed incomes of between two thousand and three thousand dollars. Fourteen per cent of these families had incomes of less than one thousand dollars; and 22 per cent had incomes of from one thousand to two thousand dollars. On the other extreme, about 6 per cent reported incomes of five thousand dollars and over. In comparison with an estimate for the United States as a whole in 1949, Moundridge had considerably fewer families with incomes over five thousand dollars.

Table III

Comparison of Income: United States and Moundridge Averages  
1949

Income Distribution	U.S. Families (in per cent)	Town Families (in per cent)
Under 1000 -----	14	14
1000-2000 -----	19	22
2000-3000 -----	21	26
3000-5000 -----	30	16
5,000-7,500 -----	11	3
7500-10,000 -----	2	2
10,000 and over -----	3	1
No information -----		16
Total -----	100	100

Sixteen per cent of the families did not give information regarding income. High income families are usually more reluctant to give information on this point, which may account for part of the deviation of Moundridge in the upper income categories from the United States as a whole. On the other hand, it is true that few wealthy families live in Moundridge.

However, we probably have a fairly accurate insight into a basic social characteristic of Moundridge, namely there are not wide extremes of income, and, as we shall see later, income differences probably do not make for sharp social differences among people in the town.

Income of farm families is not strictly comparable to that of town families. The modal income of the country families in 1950 fell between two and three thousand dollars. The absence of numerous retired families in the country probably accounted for a smaller proportion of families with incomes of less than two thousand dollars than was found in the town in 1949.

### What Moundridge Citizens Think of Their Community

The small rural community has frequently been the object of criticism because of inadequacies in social services or other facilities readily available to its citizens. To check Moundridge on this point a series of questions were asked to examine the standard of living. It was found that the people living in the country enjoy about as many modern conveniences as those living in town and the comparison for the community as a whole seems comparable to the United States as a whole and especially to American rural communities. The following table reveals the extent of modern conveniences enjoyed as measured by four indices.

	Town	Country
Ownership of automobiles	80.7%	97.7%
Ownership of radios	92.8%	88.4%
Telephone services	86.7%	90.7%
Inside bathrooms	88.4%	67.4%

To try to discover what Moundridge citizens think of their community, in both the town and country, certain questions of opinion were asked. Moundridge had no movies, skating rink or comparable type of commercial recreation. Since small rural communities are often criticized because of this lack, the first question asked was: *Do you think Moundridge has adequate recreational facilities?* In reply to this question, we found a divergence in the answers of country people and town people. Sixty per cent of the town people answered the question negatively. Twenty-one per cent of the town people thought its recreational facilities were adequate. Country opinion split in the other direction, though less extreme in its divergence. Forty-seven per cent of the country



people thought the recreational facilities were adequate, while one-third of the country people felt them to be inadequate. About a fifth of both groups offered no opinion on this question. We were not able to ascertain what character of recreational facility would be necessary to prove more attractive in the minds of young people than those in the nearest county seat.

A second question was: *Do you think Moundridge has adequate medical and dental facilities?* The small community is often criticized because of its lack of adequate medical and dental service. The response to this question exhibited little difference in opinion between town and country groups. About a third of each group thought these facilities were adequate and about 60 per cent thought they were not. The response in the town was undoubtedly influenced by the fact that a young doctor had discontinued his local practice immediately prior to the survey. Perhaps the town answers are overly pessimistic. At the time of the survey the town had only one resident doctor and one aged dentist.

A third question was: *Do you think the Moundridge school system is adequate?* The district upon which the Moundridge school system is based has as its limits the corporation of the city of Moundridge. The four-year high school draws students from the surrounding rural areas, constituting over two-thirds of its enrollment. In 1949-50, 136 pupils were enrolled in the high school and about 125 in the elementary system. In both town and country approximately 60 per cent of the respondents felt that the school system was adequate. Less than one-fifth of the informants in each group felt that it was inadequate. A major complaint was a lack of a suitable athletic plant for basketball. Since the survey a large new high school has been erected.

The fact that over one-fifth of the people interviewed in both the town and country groups had no opinion about the adequacy of the Moundridge school is also an interesting commentary on the information some citizens have of their local educational system.

In some rural communities the cooperative form of business organization has become an object of controversy. In Moundridge there is a thriving cooperative creamery, a feed mill, a gas and service station, a lumber yard and electrical appliance store, all owned and operated cooperatively. Our interviewers asked the question: *In your opinion, have cooperatives been harmful or beneficial to this community?* Among the town people, 29 per cent believed them to have been beneficial to the community, while among the country people 49 per cent felt that they had been helpful. Among the town people only 17 per cent answered that cooperatives had been harmful; among country people 21 per cent were of the opinion that they were harmful.



Perhaps fully as significant as the positive opinions which were expressed is the fact that 53 per cent of the town people expressed no opinion on the matter. Perhaps the controversy is less intense than might appear on the surface.

### **Suggestions for Improvement**

In conclusion, after discussing these issues, we asked what suggestions our informants would offer to improve the Moundridge community. Part of the response, to be sure, had been suggested by the previous line of questioning and dealt with medical and dental facilities as well as the problem of recreation. But in summary, 52 per cent of the town people offered no suggestions for improvement, while 46 per cent made one or more suggestions. Among the country people sixty-seven per cent offered suggestions for improvement, while thirty-three per cent did not.

Reviewing the specific types of answers, apart from those concerned with recreation and health, three or four occur more frequently than others and are worthy of mention.

One group feels that the community needs improvement in its spiritual and moral outlook. Dissatisfaction is expressed with the type of religious appeal or instruction found in some churches. More church attendance is recommended, an inspiration toward more godliness is wished for. Yet others feel there are too many churches functioning in Moundridge, and that churches should cooperate more than they do. A second complaint is that beer and alcoholic beverages are sold in the community. A third viewpoint expressed was that Moundridge was a community in which outsiders found it difficult to become acquainted. Some people thought Mennonites were cliqueish and not interested in people outside their own group.

What conclusions might be drawn as to the implications of these data for community betterment can better be formulated by local citizens than a professional researcher. We must think of the problems of this community in terms of a community divided and cross-divided in its religious loyalties. Socially and economically its people are intimately tied in with the farming area surrounding them. Many people feel inadequacies in the areas of recreation and medical and dental facilities, yet, by and large, most Moundridge residents are well pleased with their community.

These, then, are a few of the high points derived from our data collected from the Moundridge community. Other interrelationships capable of derivation from these data await analysis. We would suggest that here is a further way to increase our usefulness to those communities in which our constituents dwell. The community itself stands to gain from such effort. Ideally, a com-

munity should be better integrated into the conduct and interpretation of the results of the study than we were able to achieve in Moundridge.

Might it not be that a number of comparative studies would considerably clarify our understanding of the forces in given communities undergirding or undermining the traditional peace testimony of the Mennonites. At least I conceive it possible that we should arrive soon at a time when a comprehensive analysis of this element in our corporate religious testimony can be carried to a far greater degree of understanding than has been done thus far, to my knowledge, in General Conference Churches.

For example, Donald Royer, professor of sociology, of Manchester College, North Manchester, Indiana, investigating the incidents of the peace testimony in the Church of the Brethren, says in a recent issue of the *Gospel Messenger* that his research tentatively suggests that one factor associated with a waning peace testimony is the fact of loss of independent proprietorship status as we become urbanized and propertyless. Does this suggest anything to Mennonites? For example, are the forces in Moundridge recruiting for non-Mennonite Protestantism from Mennonitism in any way related to those forces undermining or undergirding the peace testimony? Do they affect all branches of the church equally?

Don. Smucker has suggested some Mennonite scholarship should be devoted to biblical and theological analysis of the nonresistant position rather than being given largely to church history.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps it is not too much to suggest that some dedicated scholarship is needed in sociological analysis in our communities, including our urban communities, if we are to grasp the true dimensions of the problem of maintaining our witness to the world in the matter of nonresistance and of discovering the true character of our testimony in other areas.

Such investigation, of course, would take one eventually into the relationships within our families where a good core of religious training must continue to be done if it is done at all. But this too can be undertaken.<sup>2</sup>

Kermit Eby, birthright Dunkard, of Mennonite lineage, who, in his middle years, is making a voyage of rediscovery into an understanding of those components of our common radical Christian heritage, is to my knowledge unexcelled in pointing up those elements of community which he feels are sloughed off in this grand social metamorphosis of our day.

Eby writes:

"I am acting as a Consultant for the Mennonite Committee on Economic and Social Relations. My primary assignment is the interpretation of the Mennonite heritage

to Mennonites. Ironically, they want my competence as a labor management consultant! Exactly what I do not want. I want to probe the Mennonite heritage and find what makes it unique. So far I have come to the following conclusions. Before a Mennonite will behave differently in regard to his employees, he must accept the fact that his heritage makes demands upon him—demands which grow out of history. For example, the Mennonites were historically communitarian. They believed that they were the stewards of property which God gave them and that property was to be secondary in life, because community came first. Also the Mennonites were levelers. Their prayer was "God help me from being so rich that I deny thee and so poor I hate my fellow men."<sup>3</sup>

Menno Simons, I am told, did not believe that a man has a right to make money on a business transaction. That is he was opposed to unearned increments. Consequently, even Melancthon, the tolerant one, called the Mennonites names which would make Jo McCarthy blush. Now with a heritage like this, Mennonites would have to examine the nature of property. Workers would always have to be more than property, by definition, *brothers*. Consequently the distinction between labor and management disappears. So does the concept of *my* property. No Mennonite, therefore could operate a business without joint decisions, open channels of communication and shared benefits."

I am not competent to evaluate Eby's thesis. Perhaps he interprets wrongly or reads history through his own spectacles. But of the need for intelligent, creative interpretation seems to me to be without question, whether we find ourselves in Moundridge, Wichita, Pennsylvania, or Paraguay.

We have community needs and interests of many sorts. We have certain latent talents in our social scientists. We have students awaiting to be given educational experience over and beyond the textbook. My challenge is that these forces can be creatively combined to produce new understandings and more refined insights into our common social situation, as we continue to build on that sure foundation which is laid in Jesus Christ. If this tiny Moundridge venture contributes to this end, it will be of genuine and lasting significance.

<sup>1</sup> Smucker, Don. E., *A Statement of Our Problems* General Conference Peace Study Conference—Eden, April 10, 11, 12, 1953, p. D-6.

<sup>2</sup> See Thomas, John L. S. J., *Religious Training in the Roman Catholic Family* American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 57, September, 1951, pp. 178-183. This study reports on an investigation into the extent of religious training in Roman Catholic families.

<sup>3</sup> Eby, Kermit, *These Things I Miss* in the *Gospel Messenger*, June 13, 1953, p. 10.



## MENNONITE ATTITUDES TOWARD WEALTH —PAST AND PRESENT

*Melvin Gingerich*

The topic before us may be interpreted in at least two ways, depending upon how the word "wealth" is defined. In the strict sense in which the word is used in economics, it means all material objects which have economic utility. Very often, however, the word is defined as meaning riches, large possessions, and an abundance of things. If the first definition were to be used, this study would concern itself largely with the presence or absence of materialism among Mennonites of the past and the present. This would require an examination of Mennonite attitudes on and teachings concerning the ethical doctrine that consideration of material well-being, especially of the individual, should rule in the determination of conduct.

The speaker prefers to limit himself primarily to a consideration of Mennonite attitudes toward riches or toward the possession of an abundance of things. This limitation, however, does not rule out all consideration of materialism, as the attitude toward material things helps determine the attitude toward the possession of abundance.

It is not difficult to learn the position of the early leader of Mennonitism on our problem.<sup>1</sup> In Menno Simons' reply to Gellius Faber, the following paragraph states his position on riches:

"Since, then, the mouth of the Lord, as also his faithful servants, James and Paul, have so plainly expressed the dangers of the rich and of those of high standing; since experience teaches how proud-hearted they are, as may be deduced from their high titles, houses, shields, medals, clothes, servants, horses and dogs; and since Christ says, 'Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven,' Matt. 18:3; therefore it would be more in accordance with evangelical righteousness, if Gellius, instead, would industriously teach such proud hearts and high persons, the humility of Christ so that they may learn to forsake themselves; may learn to know themselves, of what they are born, what they are and what they will be; that they may die unto their excessive pomp, splendor, superfluity and ungodliness; may fear God in all sincerity, and walk in his ways; that they may faithfully serve their neighbors, with their abundance in true humility of heart, and not continually enkindle the fire of pride, fleshly security and lightmindedness by his flattery or by high sounding and supplicating phrases, for the inborn ambitious nature of the flesh of Adam's children is, alas, already too apt to crave such things without being encouraged by flattery and smooth words."<sup>2</sup>



Earlier in the same article, Menno stated that experience "sufficiently teaches of what disposition the rich are, namely proud-hearted, ambitious and covetous of honor. God's wisdom did not say without a cause, 'Verily, I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God,' Matt. 19:24. James also says, 'Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten; your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you and shall eat your flesh as it were fire,' etc., James 5:1-3."\*

On another occasion Menno called attention to Christ's earthly life. "What kind of pomp, ease and comfort he enjoyed on earth, the Scriptures abundantly teach us. At his birth, there was no room for him in the inn, Luke 2:8. In his preaching, he had not where to lay his head, Luke 9:58. His entrance into Jerusalem was not accompanied with cavalry, guards and knights but upon an ass. At his death he had neither water nor wine wherewith to quench his thirst."\* Menno asks, "What was it? Was it that we should live a lustful, pleasurable life?" and then answers, "O, no."

Furthermore, Menno believed that Christian fellowship between a Christian who lives in luxury and his fellow church member who is in need was impossible. He quoted "Whoso hath this world's goods and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

In order that Christian brotherhood might prevail, Menno believed it was necessary that sharing of goods be practiced. Thus there would be neither riches nor poverty and true fellowship would be encouraged.

The sin of greed was a flagrant one in the eyes of Menno. Almost invariably when he mentioned the worst sins of his times he included avarice. The greed for worldly possessions brought with it many other evils and therefore any occupation that brought with it special temptations of greed was to be avoided. He favored agriculture and the simple crafts as the proper vocations for Christians as these did not bring the same opportunities for profiteering and riches as did commerce and finance.

These attitudes of Menno must be understood against the background of his times. Living before the days of the rise of the middle class to political and economic power and when society was more sharply divided between the rich and the poor than it is in our time, the sins of the wealthy, including those of conspicuous consumption, paternalism, and haughty demeanor were more evident by way of contrast than they are now in twentieth century America. Living in a time when the medieval ideals of

a just wage and a just price were widely held and before Adam Smith had rationalized the ethics of laissez-faire capitalism, Menno reflected the thinking of the peasants and common folk of Europe.

It would be incorrect, however, to assume that Menno's thinking was based primarily upon the social views he had acquired from the society of his day. Every view on these matters he defended by Scripture quotations. That other Anabaptists came to similar conclusions through their study of the Scriptures is significant. The Hutterian leader Peter Rideman agreed with Menno on all of the above points except that he was convinced that a true brotherhood was possible only when Christians lived in a community which had all things in common.

In the early days of both Swiss and Dutch Anabaptism it is perhaps safe to generalize by saying that very few, if any, members of their brotherhoods were men of wealth, although on the other hand it should be noted that there were artisans and professional men among them.<sup>5</sup> During the decades of persecution the wealth of the Anabaptists rapidly disappeared and they were reduced to a common low economic level. After the Dutch Mennonites were given religious liberty, representatives of this group became prosperous business and professional men. To the extent that economic disparity characterized the membership of the Dutch church, the brotherhood concept of Menno Simons was lost.

The South German and Swiss Mennonites became agricultural people, in part because of the influence of the persecutions. Finding refuge in isolated mountainous areas and on undesirable lands, they had to work industriously, to live frugally, and to farm their lands intelligently in order to remain alive. Their skill as agriculturalists won them the respect and protection of the nobility, whose lands they were invited to farm. Their contribution in the field of agriculture has been made known through the dissertation of Dr. Ernst Correll of the Graduate School Faculty of the American University. It is therefore not a matter of surprise to learn that a Christian Augsburgian was awarded an honor by the French government for his expert farming nor that a popular French almanac for many decades was *L'Anabaptiste ou le Cultivateur par Experience*.<sup>6</sup>

North German and Dutch Mennonites who fled eastward during the times of persecution also found a haven, in the swampy, undeveloped lands of the Vistula basin. Here they too became expert farmers. Many of them later took their skills to South Russia, where they again built an agrarian culture. Most of the Mennonites outside of Holland and nearby North Germany, therefore, have been farmers through four centuries.

By and large the problems of great inequality in the wealth of the brotherhoods did not face them except in Holland and North

Germany, where some entered commerce and industry.<sup>1</sup> The number of rich Mennonites was small, although occasionally a Mennonite farmer became a large land holder. Christian Augsburg, mentioned above, after he moved to Butler County, Ohio, did become the owner of almost 2000 acres of land. In South Russia Johann Cornies became the owner of more than 900 acres of land. These men, however, were rare exceptions to the general rule that Mennonites belonged to perhaps the lower middle class.

South Russia, however, offered peculiar problems. After 1840 because of rapid population increase and the government ruling that the entire estate must be handed down to a single heir rather than broken up into small holdings, many Mennonites found it difficult to acquire land. According to C. Henry Smith, it is estimated that by 1870 at least two-thirds of all heads of families in the Russian Mennonite colonies were landless. It is unnecessary to trace here the attempted solutions of this problem. It is only necessary to state that the dissatisfied landless members of the colonies organized for the purpose of obtaining justice. The struggle between the landed and the landless in the meantime had helped bring about a major schism in the Mennonite Church of Russia.

As was stated above, as long as a plentiful supply of land was available in America, Mennonites were almost altogether a farming people. After World War I, however, a shift of Mennonite population to the urban areas began. In the 1926 *Census of Religious Bodies* it is reported that 20 per cent of the members of the (Old) Mennonite Church were living in urban areas. For the General Conference Mennonites it was 14 per cent and for the Mennonite Brethren 10 per cent. How significant these figures are is debatable because they merely indicate the membership of those churches situated in cities having 2500 or more inhabitants. Many farmers and other rural residents were, very likely, members of these churches.

More significant for the purposes of this paper is a study of Mennonite occupations. The Mennonite Family Census for 1950 conducted by the Mennonite Research Foundation discovered that in a sampling of 14,253 income earners only 39.8 per cent were farmers. Farm hands and those engaged in farm related businesses brought the total up to 44.1 per cent. The variations among conference districts were very great, ranging from less than 30 per cent farmers in Franconia and Ontario to more than 60 per cent in the North Central Conference and in the Alberta-Saskatchewan Conference. Thus more than half of the income earners of the (Old) Mennonite Church are in occupations not indirectly related to farming. High on the list of other occupations are these, given in the order of their importance: building trades, factory workers, laborers, domestic workers, office workers and clerks,

teachers, mission and church workers, mechanics and garagemen, truck drivers, nurses, executive managers and salesmen.

From this list, one would assume that the great majority of Mennonites at present not engaged in farming are not necessarily employed in more lucrative positions than they would have been in farming. This is substantiated by the fact that in a sampling of non-farm Mennonite income earners, the median income for 1951 was \$3,111.73 while for Mennonite farmers it was \$3,305.

The Mennonite Research Foundation in its sampling of Mennonite income for 1951 obtained the figures presented to the government on income tax reports for 1343 income earners. One out of approximately every seventeen income earners is included in the sample. The average income was found to be \$3,899.09. Among them were 324 who received less than \$2,000. This is 24 per cent of the total. At the other end of the economic scale were 58 who received more than \$10,000 net income in 1951. This is 4 per cent of the total. The following table shows the distribution of high and low incomes in four areas of the (Old) Mennonite Church.

AREA	% below		% above	Median	
	\$2,000	\$10,000			
Pa., Md., Va., Del., Vt.....	24	%	5	%	\$3,192
New Y., Ohio, Mich., Ind., Ill.....	21	%	4.3	%	3,403
West of Mississippi .....	25.9	%	3.7	%	3,100
Canada .....	31	%	1.7	%	2,690

How much fellowship will there be between the families who get less than \$2,000 a year income and those who receive, for example, \$20,000 or more annual income? Is this a problem or is it not? Was Menno Simons right in fearing the consequences of a disparity of wealth in the brotherhood? If he was right, how great does the difference have to be before it presents a major problem? Are the Mennonite groups aware of a growing problem in this area of church life?

Is it safe to assume that one measure which can be used to determine how much thinking has been done on it is the number of articles devoted to it in Mennonite church papers? The organs of the three largest groups of North American Mennonites were searched for articles dealing with the Christian attitude toward wealth. The 1952 *Christian Leader*, organ of the Mennonite Brethren, contained no articles on the subject. *The Mennonite* for 1950, church paper of the General Conference Mennonite Church, had four short articles dealing with mutual aid and stewardship. One article summarized the help given Civilian Public Service men by the Board of Mutual Aid. A second article in a short paragraph dealt with the church offerings of Conference members. An excellent three page article dealt with stewardship and although it en-



couraged generosity in giving, it said nothing about the problems connected with wealth. The *Gospel Herald*, (Old) Mennonite organ, for 1950, in its index listed six articles on stewardship of wealth. Seven additional articles dealt with the same topic. These thirteen articles filled 20 columns in a total of 3,840 for the year. This amounts to one-half of one per cent. Although the articles urged sharing and liberality, only one mentioned the problems produced by disparity of wealth in the brotherhood and none mentioned specifically the dangers of riches.

Another approach to the problem of the Mennonite attitude toward wealth is to study district and General Conference resolutions. A rather complex index on resolutions passed by (Old) Mennonite conferences, districts and general, during the last seventy-five years does not list one resolution directly on riches, wealth, or stewardship. To show the contrast, one has only to list the number of resolutions on other subjects. The following are samples: secret societies, 70; worldly amusements, 167; voting and jury service, 54; property insurance, 21; nonresistance, 199; and nonconformity in dress, 238. There were, however, resolutions that indirectly approached the problem. Such were the 108 resolutions on business associations, the 30 on farm organizations, the 5 on interest rates, the 86 on life insurance, the 11 on materialism, the 44 on mutual aid, and the 30 resolutions on nonconformity in possessions other than dress.

The eleven resolutions on materialism contain the following phrases: "the world is drunk with moneymaking" (1904), "inordinate love for money" (1910), "danger of commercialism" (1916), "commercialism—the love of money" (1920), "commercialism that causes trust in riches" (1924), "love of riches" (1925), "growing spirit of commercialism and materialism among the brotherhood" (1945), "yielding too freely to materialism" (1948). There were thus, according to this study, in the last twenty years only very few (Old) Mennonite conference resolutions that dealt with the love of money or materialism. Does this mean that the problems presented by the possession of wealth did not and do not exist in our brotherhoods? Or does it mean that the churches are not aware of their problems in this area? The writer is inclined to accept the second explanation, as will be shown later.

Another study of the Mennonite attitude toward wealth was made recently under the direction of Paul Stoll, instructor in psychology at Goshen College. The Thematic Apperception Test was given to freshman classes in Goshen, Bethel, and Hesston colleges. This test is designed to reveal the "dominant drives, emotions, sentiments, complexes and conflicts of a personality," according to its advocates. The procedure is that of presenting a series of pictures to a subject and encouraging him to tell stories about them, invented on the spur of the moment. Those

who recommend this text explain that these stories reveal significant components of personality because of two psychological tendencies: the tendency of people to interpret an ambiguous human situation in conformity with their past experiences and present wants and to draw on their fund of experiences, expressing their sentiments and needs, whether conscious or unconscious.

Five pictures were used, two of which were key pictures. One showed a man standing in the doorway of his modern home, looking into the distance. In front of him was an expensive car. To his left was a huge barn, silos, and a herd of fat cattle. Across the road and in the distance to the man's right was a church. The second picture was a family scene in the home parlor. The children were grouped around the father, who was removing money from his billfold.

According to Professor Stoll's interpretation of the stories which Goshen College freshmen wrote concerning these two pictures, "Sin was frequently associated with poverty, but twice as often with wealth." Godliness was associated almost entirely with at least some material possession, in line with a general idea that the 'good living' of a Christian is bound to produce a 'good life.'" On the other hand these students seemed to feel that too much achievement by worldly standards brought the temptation of worldliness and therefore wealth must be used for charitable purposes. There were, however, about half as many cases of response indicating that the uses of wealth were not for charitable purposes but rather to obtain personal comfort or pleasure.

Mr. Stoll in comparing the response of Goshen and Bethel students in this test has this to say, "The picture of the man standing in his doorway, if it elicited from the Bethel students a perception of wealth, almost-never resulted in the typical story found in the Goshen College protocols, i.e., that the man was surveying his wealth and as he saw the church, he wondered if he should not give more of his money to the church rather than to use it selfishly. Bethel College students saw, rather, an individual who was surveying his material possessions and thanking God for them, realizing that anything he has was received through God. The concept of ungodliness concerning wealthy people almost never appears. Occasionally lack of wealth was attributed to sinful, ungodly character, but even this did not occur as frequently, or with the same feeling, as among Goshen students . . . In the Bethel protocols, there seems to be considerably less concern with material things and more frequent expression of Christian values."

One can raise certain questions concerning the validity of these tests, the chief of which would be whether the sampling was sufficiently large to permit generalization. One may also ask whether freshmen thinking is typical of Mennonite community

thought. Professor Stoll and the writer are of the opinion that the test did reflect accurately the values these students had acquired in their home communities. Where they received these values is another matter. Were they the results of church, home, or public school influences? At any rate, they revealed some attitudes of confusion and of improper interpretations concerning wealth and material things which may well give serious concern to our church leaders.

If the conclusions above that the Mennonite churches in America have said or written little concerning the dangers of riches are correct, one must ask if they have been blind or if up to now the problem was not a real one. One of Menno Simons' fears was that wealth would lead to display and to the adoption of manners which would break down genuine brotherhood. According to the figures given above, there is a greater disparity of wealth among the (Old) Mennonites of the East than there is among those of the central states. This very likely has long been the case. It should be pointed out that in the eastern area of the church, however, an attempt has always been made to prevent through church discipline the conspicuous display of wealth. The Franconia Conference resolution which declares "Therefore we urge that our members refrain from useless and wasteful expenditures of money in their homes, on their persons, in their automobiles, and in their general standard of living" is typical of many that could be quoted. As long as this ideal of nonconformity to worldly ways is enforced, it would appear that the rich man would not be allowed to adopt a way of life which would separate him from his poor brother. Perhaps this is the reason so little is said directly on the dangers of riches. On the other hand, where these controls do not exist or are inoperative one would guess that the chasm between our two Mennonite economic groups would become increasingly great unless the church sets up new standards of stewardship and simple living, which will curb this tendency toward stratification. This barrier in some areas has already become a social one. As soon as rich members of the church find primary social contacts in their professional and country clubs their connection with the brotherhood in time becomes severed. Has wealth produced this or may they have become wealthy because they were already worldly-minded? Certainly Menno Simons, and Christ, would teach us that the possession of wealth brings with it great temptations in these areas.

Not all of the rich, however, leave the church, although there is a tendency for this to happen. There are those wealthy Mennonites who can remember the days when they were poor and who try deliberately to maintain close spiritual and social fellowship with their friends of former years. On the other hand, observers have pointed out that when there are enough people of



wealth in a congregation so that they can have their exclusive social circles these individuals tend to withdraw themselves and to have a fellowship of their own. Their wealth has given them interest in travel, good books, good music, higher education and other areas of culture that naturally draws them together. They will want their children to marry those of a similar economic and cultural level and will therefore discourage them from associating with the financially poor young people of the congregation. The kind of car the young man drives may be the key to get him into this exclusive society. On the other hand, the poorer members of the congregation would feel very ill at ease in this kind of society and thus tend to form their own social group. The above is not speculative but is an actual report from a number of keenly observant young Mennonites who described to the writer the conditions in Mennonite communities with which they had become familiar in recent years. It is a tendency that should cause church leaders great concern and much study.

Mennonites will not return to the farm it may be safe to assume. We have voluntarily and involuntarily entered the professional and business arena. It is safe to assume that in the competitive business world an increasingly large number of Mennonites will acquire the training and skills that will take them into the wealthy class. We now have Mennonite millionaires in America and the number worth half a million is growing steadily. Although the New Testament emphasizes again and again the great danger of riches, it is doubtful if Twentieth Century Mennonites will adopt even functional poverty as a way of life in spite of our centuries' old emphasis upon the simple life. There may, therefore, be only two ways in which we may save ourselves from disintegration. One approach is that of a strict discipline in all phases of the standard of living, be that in automobiles, clothing, houses, or house furnishings so that the person of wealth will not be allowed to set himself apart from his fellow Christians by a standard of living and a way of life which others might envy but which they could not possibly imitate. The other way is through a teaching program on stewardship, which we do not now have in a very effective form, that will convince the man of wealth that his possessions must be used for the cause of the Kingdom and dare not be expended upon himself for luxurious living.

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<sup>1</sup>I am greatly indebted to Donald Sommer, Kidron, Ohio, who wrote his 1951-52 Goshen College Social Science seminar paper on the topic of "The Economic Teachings of Menno Simons and Peter Rideman as Representatives of Sixteenth Century Anabaptism." His selections from the writings of Menno are here used.



<sup>1</sup> *The Complete Works of Menno Simons*, (Elkhart, 1871) Part 2, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16-17.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 305.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Peachey's doctoral dissertation on the economic status of the Anabaptists clarifies this picture. Dr. Peachey shows that all social classes were found among the Swiss Anabaptists with the middle class strongly represented.

<sup>5</sup> This periodical was first issued in 1812. By 1877 the almanac was known as *L' Anabaptiste des Campagnes*.

<sup>6</sup> This paper limits itself primarily to the study of the Mennonites of Switzerland, South Germany, Russia and their descendants who came to America. Additional studies should be made of the affect of wealth on the Dutch and North German Mennonites.

## A CRITIQUE OF MENNONITES AT MID-CENTURY

Don E. Smucker

In this paper the frame of reference will be primarily to the Mennonites in the United States and Canada. Even this geographical limitation makes generalizations difficult in view of the fact that the Cultural Problems Conference is an inter-Mennonite and Brethren in Christ venture. And generalizations among these conferences is difficult even as it is among any one group as, for example, in the highly complex General Conference group.

The historical epoch in which this evaluation takes place is unquestionably a period generally creative and dynamic. Almost everything now engaging our attention was launched in the past fifty years, or, roughly speaking, at the turn of the century in which we are now mid-way. Missions, schools, scholarly endeavour, music and the arts, church program, publications, inter-denominational contacts, international travel, inter-Mennonite communication both American and world-wide, ministerial training, business and professional developments, the many concerns of the Mennonite Central Committee—all these are obvious signs and proofs of the creativity of the past fifty years. For this we must give thanks to our Heavenly Father. For this we can be especially grateful when the denial of Christ is so rampant in the world. To all of us who have had the privilege of growing up in families, schools and churches in the vanguard of these new evidences of vitality, there is special reason for personal gratitude. Instead of stultification, suppression and decay, many of us have been encouraged to go forward on the frontiers of the faith.

Before we deal with more specific matters, it is important to face more sombre and ominous dimensions of our problem. Any profound understanding of the nature and destiny of man, including Christian man, should tell us that the church suffers both from adversity and prosperity. On the one hand, is the martyr church of Russia, completely shattered in the overt institutional sense though, I trust, still existing in the primitive definition of two or three gathered together in the name of Christ. Many members are dead, many dispersed in a modern *diaspora*, some alive but lost to Communism and some alive as Daniels and Grebels. On the other hand, the church is in danger precisely at those moments of greatness which freedom and prosperity, acceptance and response have brought about. At this point various kinds of secular adjustment take place, partly conscious and partly unconscious. It is this peculiar temptation of prosperity, this vulnerability in times of success, this collapse at the pinnacle of greatness which provides the warning for our survey here in the United States and Canada.

In a large sense the scope of this paper poses the problem of tradition. The Mennonites arose to protest against the protestants. These Protestants sought to extricate the Bible and the Gospel from the accretions of tradition in the Roman church, Menno stresses again and again: "I care not for your ceremonies, your learning, your ritual, your orthodoxy, if it is not biblical and if it does not give evidence of a new way of life."

This same cry has been uttered throughout the Christian history much to the dismay and pain of those in entrenched institutions. Today it can be heard within our own ranks—and it is still not pleasant, particularly when we are heirs of an intensely Protestant background. Indeed, we are heirs of the left-wing of the Reformation.

Perhaps the most illuminating typology for the study of church life is that worked out by Ernst Troeltsch in his *Social Teachings of the Christian Churches* first published in Germany in 1912 and still in print in both German and English. The basic thesis is that the two main recurring types in the Christian church are the sect type and the church type. The sect type is enthusiastic, converted, emphasizes the priesthood of all believers, discipleship, considers early church the norm and above all sees the church in permanent tension with the world of culture. The church type is at peace with the world, stresses the priesthood and the specialist, does not expect everyone to attain to high standards, considers tradition highly important and has a psychology of success rather than martyrdom. In our country H. Richard Niebuhr has written several extensive commentaries on this typology, and many others continue to find it helpful.

By and large, it is assumed that the sect type can survive only in the first generation and that thereafter the story is one of transition to the church type. Obviously, if this is the case we are caught in the throes of an inexorable law of religious institutions. Alas, Troeltsch has been right only too often. Yet, the church cannot be seen through strictly sociological and historical categories. This paper started with a paradox which included the emphasis on the present as one of the truly creative phases in Mennonite history as a phase of Christian history generally. The Living Lordship of the Risen Christ can come and shatter cycles of death. The Word of God is not bound, as Paul said to Timothy. Nor is change necessarily a sign of decay. We must consult our hopes as well as our fears as we survey the Mennonites at mid-century.

Let us consider four basic tasks of the church: It must be redemptive, communal, prophetic and relational.



## I

**The Redemptive Function of the Community**

As a redemptive community the Christian church has the *kerygma* or proclamation of the Gospel: the story of the life, death, resurrection and coming again of Christ. By this Divine visitation of sinful humanity reconciliation can take place with the Living God, the most important fact of all time and eternity. How well have Mennonites carried forth the *Kerygma*? Generally speaking, we are known as evangelical Christians, the word evangelical being another one of those English words transliterated from the Greek and referring to the Good News at the heart of the Christian faith. In America, the term evangelical has also come to mean conservative and fundamentalist. Which is to say, a particular interpretation of Christianity as an evangelical faith.

The sturdily biblical orientation of the Mennonite churches has made a courageous, though imperfect, witness to keep the evangelical foundations of the Christian faith. Often this witness has been intertwined with theologies which are self-consciously conservative but dubiously biblical. Robert Friedmann has suggested that the real temptation of Mennonites has not been modernism but pietism, namely, an excessively subjective, highly individualistic, emotional sort of Christianity which plays down the objectivity of discipleship and dissolves the brotherhood into a collection of individuals at peace with the world.

Against this background we need to see the major split among the Mennonites in Russia where a protest was needed against the tendency to fall into a *volkskirche* where Mennonites became a religio-cultural community instead of a redeemed Christian community on a voluntary basis. It may be indiscreet to treat this issue or for a General Conference Mennonite to admit the necessity of renewal. On the other hand, the heirs of this Russian revival seem to be perennially split between the Baptist pietists and the chastened Anabaptists—in a sense, a sharpened presentation of the problem of almost all Mennonites.

The plain people among the Mennonite branches are vulnerable to another temptation which tends to obscure the redemptive character of the Gospel. It is the temptation to bury Christian liberty under excessive legalism which causes many Christians to question if this is the Good News which delivered men from the Law and if the Galatian epistle is in the canon of the New Testament. A glowing illustration of this temptation is found in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, where a \$25,000,000 tobacco business has grown up in the very heart of the plain people.

Various attempts have been made to mediate the Gospel among Mennonites through more humanistic and modernistic theologies.

The influence was greatest in the colleges where faculty members had met modern thought in graduate and undergraduate schools throughout Europe and America. The upheaval which closed Goshen College for one year, which purged Bluffton College of its most outspoken liberal Bible teacher, and which led to vigorous polemical literature tended to check any official or major move away from an evangelical theology. Meanwhile, the changing theological climate in Europe and America after several wars and catastrophes has placed further checks on this liberal movement.

However, some of the impacts of this movement remain. The philosophy of liberal arts in education is a legacy of this movement which is simply an emphasis on humanistic learning in a Christian context. By humanistic I mean humanism in the Renaissance sense of studying the history, heritage range and scope of human life. Moreover, the legacy of the empirical *method* remains whereby observation, reason and experiment are used to obtain knowledge in concrete situations.

No doubt some of our scholars are still more Greek than Hebraic. That is, more prone to think in philosophical and scientific categories than biblical. No doubt the impact of liberal arts and the scientific method on the nine schools represented in these sessions is considerable and permanent. (Indeed, Grace Bible Institute has within its brief ten years moved from a Bible Institute curriculum to a Christian liberal arts curriculum, however, with majors only for church vocations.) But it is still assumed—and properly so, I think—that our schools are places where the proclamation of the Gospel is helped not hindered.

From this survey, then, it appears that Mennonites are a redemptive community with the *kerygma* but they are tempted by various forms of pietism, legalism and modernism.

### Missions and Evangelism

Now let us move from the *kerygma* in our theology to the *kerygma* in our program, namely, missions and evangelism.

Our effectiveness in proclaiming the Gospel in foreign lands has been good. On the whole, our missionaries have been able to move far ahead of the American pattern of work—and with commendable fruits. The call, the commitment, the surrender and the advanced training, both theological and technical have been there. Mission boards have financed further training while on furloughs, something which college boards never thought of doing for teachers on sabbaticals—at least not until very recently. Children have been educated in fine Christian schools. The missions have had the proclamation of the Gospel at the heart of their work yet have had a full program of medical, educational, relief, and gen-

eral cultural aid. Almost no one has cried out against this as merely good works even though much of the daily routine has been in good works.

The mission results have been modest but impressive with many solid congregations across many continents of the world. The converts have come out of strange new cultures, with new linguistic patterns and religious backgrounds hostile to Christianity. Since most of these missions have been among colored peoples previously subjected to white imperialism and colonialism, it would be interesting to know how well our missionaries have adjusted to the pleas for greater trust and participation in control of missionary property and missionary organization by native converts. In part our missions have felt less of this by being more rural, more isolated, and away from urban, industrial and political movements. But the impact is there nonetheless.

In a land like China where the well-established Mennonite missions have been without American workers since the early years of World War II, we can only hope that the nationals of these countries were experienced in self-government and that the Gospel they heard was not necessarily bound up with white, Western culture any more than it dare be bound up with the red hues of Communist culture.

Finally, we have the right to know more about the impact of nonresistance in the mission field. In India, for example, army duty and war work led to wages absolutely unheard of for hosts of people. To resist this in India was and is just as difficult as it is in America. More research is needed on this and when it comes I suspect it will not be altogether pleasing to some of us.

As a footnote here may I also point out that only in foreign missions can a Mennonite married woman have both career and marriage. Only on the mission field have arrangements been made for domestic work to be done so that the wife may continue with her professional calling of doctor, nurse, teacher or evangelist while also being a wife and mother.

In home missions the picture is somewhat different. One only needs to survey any typical gathering of Mennonites to discover that almost every name is rooted in generations of Mennonite life. The Mennonite evangelistic impact in America has been virtually nil in terms of a 200 year span. We have not heeded any lessons from foreign missions: we have not studied American language and culture as in foreign lands; in home missions we have set up conditions almost impossible for families with children; we have had understaffed and under-financed missions; we have tried to rely on preaching and praying without other aspects of a full program. In short, we have not had the total Gospel for the total man in the total situation.



Nevertheless, a Gospel witness has been made and among the various branches another attack is being launched in the home field. One veteran city mission worker demands that we do not use statistical criteria in judging city missions but rather that we use the criteria of witness. From this approach he feels that a faithful Gospel witness has been made in the larger city where he has labored even though his membership, equipment and program are very small.

The time has come for us to apply the general pattern of foreign missions to the America scene: call and commitment, previous study and preparation for a specific field, adequate staff of workers, good equipment, a well rounded program, in short, the total Gospel for the total man in the total situation.

This also raises the question of the evangelistic impact of our local congregations. In Canada this is almost impossible among the Mennonites from Russia since the language of our congregations is German rather than English. Yet even where no language barriers exist we must ask searchingly and frankly under God why we continue to fail in reaching out beyond the nurturing of our own kith and kin. The question is: What is necessary and what is *not* really necessary to the Gospel and the Christian brotherhood in order to move forward?

## II

### Communal Function of The Church

The communal function of the church assumes that it is a Christian brotherhood created by the gracious love of Christ and that we have a corporate existence united by grateful love. We are not atomistic individuals who merely converge on Sunday for worship. We are in the *koinonia*, the fellowship which follows the early church in accepting mutual liability for one and all in the brotherhood in order to have a base for going out into the world for witness and service. This common liability includes nurture, education, publication, economic help and service. Here we are not just referring to things planned at the top of the church like missions, schools and relief. These we do rather corporately. But I am referring to the local congregation and the extent to which it is an economic as well as spiritual brotherhood.

There is no question about the ability of the Mennonite branches to respond to a crisis in the brotherhood. Migration from Russia after World War I and II, CPS in World War II and Relief in Europe have evoked a fine response in money, goods and workers. There is no doubt that our Mennonite branches have continuously expanded their program with commensurate support as it has grown. There is no doubt a kind of unwritten mutual aid surrounding our congregations which can be aroused at points of



great need. Those of us who have experienced this can be especially grateful.

Moreover, we can be happy that mutual aid in the more formal sense is returning to Mennonite life once again. On the whole, this tends to operate more at the conference top than the congregational base. Indeed, these previously charitable remarks lead me now to point out that basically we are organized as Protestant individualists with fairly capricious stewardship rather than communal, brotherhood Christians.

The funds available to the mutual aid boards are, as yet, infinitesimal in relation to the total wealth of the brotherhood. These boards are symbols of what might be, rather than realities of what is a widespread development.

To be sure there are other mutual aid activities such as the many fire insurance companies, the Mennonite Aid Society of Mountain Lake, Minnesota which provides life insurance and others. Their funds and memberships are considerable. In addition, Mennonites have invested in what may well be into the millions of dollars in many varieties of commercial insurance in which the principle of mutual aid is applied by secular organizations. Conservative Mennonites still witness against life insurance as being an unjustified and materialistic form of mutual aid, nevertheless very little protest is heard on this subject today.

In brotherhood life it is important to note that even a fully developed program of mutual aid in the brotherhood cannot completely satisfy the demands of New Testament *agape* love. Mutual aid is calculating and circumscribed: it helps those who join a particular mutual aid organization and only those. Or, in the case of the church as a whole, it helps members of the church and only the members. The uncalculating, gracious character of love in the Lord Jesus Christ flows forth freely without regard to such factors as the parable of the Good Samaritan and the parable of the Prodigal Son reveal. Yet let us hasten to add that individualistic Protestantism is usually not as good as mutual aid: it lets the members do the best they can in the competitive world with help in the form of charity to selected extreme cases. Consequently mutual aid looks very good to the victims of Protestant individualism. But the point remains: it still does not meet the radical demands of *agape* even though it does meet the demands of the Golden Rule.

If Protestant individualism has qualified mutual aid among American Mennonites, avarice and materialism have qualified many deep well-springs of Christian discipleship at other levels of the various branches. Western civilization has not known any more sturdily capitalistic culture than that here in North America. The system of an expanding investment economy open to individ-

ual investors fit only too well into our German frugality, industry and technical know-how and our Christian discipline and sobriety.

To be sure, the growing prosperity of American Mennonites has permitted our institutional growth and missionary expansion. Without prosperity such far-flung enterprises would be impossible. Yet the Mennonite Research Foundation studies show that the Old Mennonites are still giving approximately five per cent of their annual income to all church needs however lagging well behind leaders in giving such as the Wesleyan Methodists and the Seventh Day Adventists. And it is quite likely that the Old Mennonite giving ranks with the highest of all Mennonite branches. Thus much growth can come in stewardship before we reach even a tithe of our church incomes.

Modern social science has bequeathed to us the profound concept of culture—an explicit organization of values and activities which molds everyone within a given society. There is no doubt that capitalism here has a specific cultural impact on Americans in general and Mennonites in particular. Perhaps modern social prophets have underestimated the value of capitalism for freedom and the encouragement of initiative and creativity. But we may heed their warnings on the criteria of money for success and status and the essentially marginal role which stewardship begins to play in this context because now material prosperity is due to *my* hard work and cleverness and property ceases to be a God-given trust but a reward to the virtuous.

To understand this it is virtually mandatory to travel outside the United States or Canada. We live in the richest parts of the richest countries in the world. Many poor people in Europe, Asia and Africa know this and do not like it. And many Americans still believe they can buy their way into peoples' hearts.

The tremendous prestige of capitalism and the great revulsion against atheistic Communism must not obscure the critical faculties of our churches in continuing to ask whether the Anabaptist vision based on Holy Scripture of a Christian brotherhood has not been seriously damaged by a union of Protestant individualism and capitalistic materialism.

In connection with the communal life of the church, let us turn now to our educational program. In the Mennonite awakening of the past fifty years the colleges have been coterminous with that development. How shall we think of their role in the communal function of the church?

First of all, let us point to a scandal; the scandal of our college finances. This I know from growing up on one of the campuses with my father as one who taught in two of the colleges. Because of a very fickle kind of support, the college faculties have been and still are being subjected to various supplements to income

in order to survive. During the depression actual privation took place. But before and since the teachers have been forced to do outside work of some kind with a tendency to get too involved in frenzied commercial enterprises. Faculty children may become embittered about the discrepancy between incomes of teachers and other professions, sufficient to cause some to leave the church. To be sure, there are definite signs of progress. But at the present level of prosperity and the present percentage of giving there is no need for this ridiculous situation.

As for the more far-reaching implications of our schools, it is, of course, difficult to speak. We tend to be sentimentally in favor of our Alma Maters or bitterly and vitriolically opposed to them as places of philosophy and vain deceit.

Many have used the colleges as stepladders to climb out of the church and to lead useful lives elsewhere. Others have found the colleges to be places where Christian vocation became real. Some have lost their spiritual music in college and others found their Lord while there. But the overwhelming fact is that our college graduates have been in the vanguard of leadership in missions, the local ministry, publications, relief, peace, youth work, the arts and a dozen other crucial areas. Surely as leader-producing agencies their role is beyond question.

It is surprising that the liberal arts formula dominated all the colleges and that we did not get at least one agricultural college, or one business college or one technical college.

None of our colleges are considered distinguished by popular evaluation in the way Yale, Chicago, Oberlin, Amherst or Swarthmore would be so considered. Mediocrity has no doubt characterized some schools and some of the departments in all the schools, particularly when there are one-man departments with no alternative to a poor teacher. On the other hand, three of our colleges are now fully accredited which means they have standard practices in line with the general pattern. There are great teachers in a number of the schools and some departments which have been superb for many years. Indeed, these schools may well be moving toward their finest pinnacle of achievement as outstanding Christian liberal arts colleges.

In the other institutions of learning many of our teachers are respected as men and women of real collegiate stature and a few have national reputations, the latter primarily in church history.

As a biblical people we have not yet produced a first-rate widely known biblical scholar even though we have had and do have some fine expositors in both classroom and pulpit. If we are to encourage truly distinguished scholarship our teachers will have to be released from excessive economic struggle and excessive



academic responsibility. Perhaps the Goshen pattern is most suggestive in view of the numerous books produced by that faculty, the pattern of relationships with the publishing house, and the encouragement to write and do research.

With regard to publications within the communal life of the church we are in a rich era of expansion and growth. Since 1927 the *Mennonite Quarterly Review* has published solid scholarly essays which have earned it a great reputation among historians.

Each branch has its own official publication, usually weekly, some of these being quite mediocre and some rather outstanding. Surely one of the finest papers is the *Mennonite Weekly Review* which has done as much for Mennonite unity as any one force among the branches. It is well-edited, interesting, balanced and informative.

New publications have developed reflecting the pictorial pattern of *Life* and *Look*. Here *Mennonite Life* and *Mennonite Community* have made vivid through pictures and lively text a host of current Mennonite activities.

Apart from many other publications which are weekly or monthly there is the growing development of Christian education or Sunday school literature. Starting from modest beginnings this is now likely to be a major achievement of this generation and, fortunately, a rather unifying one since cooperation among the branches is a marked and striking fact.

As for writers in the church, there has been too much of a tendency to assume that writing doesn't need special preparation, that writing does not take time and that writers do not need financial support. The upshot of this is that more of our writing of educational materials will have to be done by trained, full-time people.

The production of Sunday school materials calls for creative writing and spiritual insight, skills in drawing and layout, technical skills in printing and production. Here is a good example of where the cultured Christian community can utilize its cultural development for the glory of God.

In other cultural activities of the church, music still remains the major emphasis. The colleges have excellent choirs with Bethel the first to achieve European concerts along with their traditional coast to coast presentations here. The First Mennonite Church of Berne, Indiana, has a well deserved reputation for truly distinguished renditions of the great oratorios which would rank with the best. And other communities have music festivals which do effective work. On the other hand, there is still much popular music culture, seeking to streamline and modernize too much of the



sacred music culture of our people. But, music remains as our leading cultural achievement.

Other fine arts are also developing with Prof. John P. Klassen of Bluffton very likely the leading Mennonite sculptor and art teacher, a legacy of his training in Munich and his life in Russia. There are other good art teachers in our schools and a modest interest along these lines, even though this is more suspect among our people. Wall decorations on most Mennonite homes suggest that appreciation of good paintings is almost nonexistent with most things purchased in religious book stores which traffic completely in mass produced, currently processed, dubiously Christian art.

Dramatic arts are still controversial among some groups yet have been used for a good many years in a number of the schools. On the whole, the themes of plays have been religious and moral in character.

The schools have had more modest success with instrumental groups of musicians and one has the impression that many Mennonites love classical symphonic music and collect records or listen to the better radio programs. In any case, through radio, records and higher education the fine arts have now made a basic impact on American Mennonite life.

### III

#### The Prophetic Function of The Church

We turn now to the prophetic function of the church. This is the necessity to proclaim the will of God and the Word of God over every aspect of human life that it may stand under judgment. And thus under judgment that it may then hear the offer of mercy and grace and love. This function was bequeathed by the Old Testament prophets, continued by our Lord and the apostles and extended into Christian history by fearless men sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Have Mennonites been a prophetic community of Christians?

Our critics rather unanimously think not. The charge of withdrawing from the fray is made every time a non-Mennonite writes about us, as, for example, John C. Bennett in *Christian Ethics and Social Policy*. Or the charge is made orally whenever the Mennonite "type" is introduced into debate or discussion among other Christians. We are considered noble, morally earnest, interesting, suffering, queer, quiet and nonprophetic. Our willingness to refuse cooperation with evil is granted. But our willingness to pronounce open, bold judgment on evil and sin is not granted. What shall we say to this indictment? This rather poor public relations record?

Of course, part of it is true. Because of persecution, because of inferiority complexes based on cultural and linguistic differences, because of rural backgrounds, because of restraint on education, because of a decline of missionary spirit, the prophetic office has tended to be rejected. This is unfortunate.

On the other hand, part of this is the wholly inadequate understanding of what it means to reject violence and coercion in human institutions. There is a withdrawal for the sake of withdrawal—this is patently unchristian. There is a withdrawal for the sake and for the name of Christ. But this has not been made clear in our old *stille im lande* background. Silent suffering is profoundly Christian. But there is also a clear biblical case for boldness in the prophetic office in proclaiming God's will, even where this is a "scandal," a foolishness which does not necessarily fulfill the law but may contradict and shatter all human law.

I felt something of the thrilling challenge of this office when testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee for the MCC. There I used words of protest and spoke words of doom and judgment over the course of military conscription. In part what I proposed in Christ's name would fulfill the law, and be good for America. In part what I proposed was the foolishness of the Cross which I could not possibly spell out in statutes and rational legal analysis.

Perhaps our peace witness is the nearest we have come to a prophetic ministry. But we have focused too sharply on the more military aspects of our Lord's judgment on the kingdoms of this world. Our Lord also stands in judgment over avarice and economic greed; over crass human pride manifested in our racial prejudices; over the idolatrous nationalism which is the greatest modern religion; over unredemptive penal institutions; over crime-producing slums and neighborhoods; over the proud scientism and secularism of many centers of learning; over millions of poverty-stricken, hopeless victims of war, over the identification of the Gospel with any one culture or language. The scope of the prophetic office is indeed limitless as God's will is made known to sinful humanity. In making known this will we also make it clear that only Christians can do His will. Yet to defy God's will is fatal to anyone who remains permanently foolish and rebellious. Then we proclaim the suffering Christ of the Cross who died for us and is now suffering with us. Indeed, this is a glorious office for the Christian.

Our peace witness must become more prophetic despite the complicated legal aspects of being a peace witness in the U.S.A. under I-W service in the context of conscription. It cannot be naively activist or glibly relevant. But it must be courageous as well as loving.

The relief work of the church has been both communal and prophetic. That is both among our people and beyond our people. Bitter human creatures often cannot stand any form of words after betrayal by pseudo-political leaders and damning experiences of war and totalitarian terror. The quieter relief work witness is prophetic in that it rebukes carnal strife by introducing a new way of life into a situation of bitter gall.

In no sense is our work large enough to solve the immediate problem and deep enough to solve the long term problem. Thus it must be a small-scale working model, a down payment, an earnest of what God is really trying to say to these victims and/or participants in a tragedy.

The resiliency of our peace and service work is cause for rejoicing at Mid-Century. When militarism is at its worst, our peace work must be at its best. Despite the collapse of much peace sentiment at the local level there is a vigor and a momentum to our program which can be nothing less than the Lord speaking through us to overcome evil with good.

Let us pray that we may not only read the face of the sky but discern the signs of the times. Finally and ultimately God's will must be done. Ultimately sin must be routed. This is the Christian hope which operates through the return of Christ at the end of history. But there is also an encounter with Christ *in* history. Here is the place where we must improve most in the years to come.

#### IV

#### The Relational Function of the Church

The final function of the church is relational. This is the task of being related to other Christians and other non-Christian orders. The first because Mennonites are Christians who know that many others also name the name of Christ as Lord; the second, because we are a missionary community moving beyond our closed societies of yesteryear.

Our relation to other Christians is proceeding *functionally* rather than *officially* though some is functional and official. By this I mean we are related to C.A.R.E., for example, through MCC. Or through Church Peace Mission through MCC. The former was set up to carry out a supplemental food business from individuals to individuals and the latter to witness to other Christians for non-resistance.

The publication boards using the International lessons have participated in a section of the International Council of Religious Education. The mission boards in the Foreign Missions Conference. The College in the group for Christian higher education. All these were merged with the National Council of Churches.



The Mennonite Brethren and the Brethren in Christ are officially in the National Association of Evangelicals, suggesting a second pattern of going all out for official affiliation at the top with an inter-denominational group. This is in contrast with the previously outlined functional tie-ups with the parts of the National Council with which we are in agreement. Attendance at N.A.E. meetings only serves to dramatize that one is not in total agreement with this movement as a whole any more than one is in total agreement with any inter-denominational group.

Obviously, here is one of the most glaring gaps in American and Canadian Mennonite life: we have no clearly thought out policy for inter-denominational action. This simply cannot be the case in the years ahead. It appears to be obscurantist and reactionary. Admittedly, the polemical atmosphere surrounding this issue makes it hard to think clearly.

But, questions continue to come from the following areas:

1. Our foreign missionaries have for many years worked with the official inter-denominational agency in their country for the purpose of comity agreements and Christian fellowship.

2. Our relief workers have had similar contacts as, for example, in Germany.

3. Our Mennonite brethren in Europe, particularly in Holland, interpret this lack of ecumenical policy as due to fear and insecurity.

4. Other Christians invite us to make a witness to enrich the total Christian fellowship. The witness entrusted to us must be made.

5. A solid Mennonite theological and ethical position is emerging from missions, relief, peace, service and nurture which we can explain, defend and support in our relationships with other Christians. Thus, we would not enter these movements as country bumpkins afraid of our critics but as well-equipped Christians eager for discussion of great issues concerning the nature of the Gospel, the nature of the church, the nature of the Christian life, the meaning of secular institutions, the nature of the Christian hope and eschatology.

For all these reasons the present ambiguous pattern must be overcome. To some this may mean working with the National Association of Evangelicals where one confronts one set of problems; or working with the World Council or National Council where one confronts another set of problems. In either case, or in any case, we cannot affiliate with any group if it means deeding over our conscience or our freedom of conviction. But it does mean that we catch up with our missionaries and relief workers by a



more honorable, honest and forthright approach to the inter-denominational question.

Missionary work has brought us into contact with most of the major living religions with the least contact in relation to Islam. The burden of work among Islam must not be forgotten since it is Christianity's most devastatingly successful competitor.

However, it may well be that Communism is the greatest religion of our world, at least the greatest secular religion. Here I believe the Lord has a special task for us in view of the Russian martyrdom. A task to deliberately prepare and plan to reach those of Communist persuasion with the Gospel. This is an astute, wily, deterministic philosophical modern mind. But a knowledge of Russian language, literature, psychology, history and religion should be developed in order to discharge the missionary debt which we could not pay when in Russia because of the non-proselyting promise to Catherine the Great and subsequent Czars.

Perhaps it is fitting to close the section on relations by noting with deep satisfaction that inter-Mennonite relations have reached an all-time high here in North America. As a case in point, I suggest a study of Kitchener, Ontario, to discover the many ways in which the Mennonites love and know each other. Or again the supreme achievement of the Mennonite Central Committee, truly an instrument of the Lord showing us how much we had in common, more, indeed, than we knew. Other cementing effects are inter-Mennonite publications, inter-Mennonite tours and trips, the Cultural Problems Conference, the regular meetings of the college administrators and, last summer, the climactic World Conference in Switzerland. Now I-W work again creates a far-flung and larger cluster of inter-Mennonite life. Surely there will be further manifestations of unity through the years, albeit slowly and cautiously.

We are a small, divided denomination growing in unity and creativity. Our achievements at Mid-Century are substantial. Most fortunately we still accept the basic realities of the Gospel. May the power of Christ serve us further as a brotherhood in evangelization in communal life, our prophetic office and our relations with other Christians.

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*J. W. Fretz*

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